2

TOMOMI YAMASHITA

Apothecarius Argentum

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Volume 2

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Character Introductions / The Story So Far

Argent was fed poison during his youth to turn him into the ultimate assassin. The King of Beazol buys the slave Argent to be the food taster for his young daughter. However, the Princess frees Argent and instructs him to flee from the palace.

Years later, Argent reappears as a skilled healer and saves the Princess from an assassination attempt. As a result, he's promoted to the position of Royal Apothecary. Along with Soda, his apprentice, Argent works tirelessly for the people of the Kingdom of Beazol.

MY ATTENDANT TOLD ME THAT I SHOULD KNOW MORE ABOUT YOU SO WE COULD BE FRIENDS.
TELL ME, ARGENT...
WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE FOOD? YOUR FAVORITE FLOWER?
WHAT ABOUT YOU, ARGENT?
I LOVE SHRIMP AND PRIMROSES
HEY?
DON'T TOUCH ME!!
WHY WON'T YOU TALK TO ME?
PRINCESS...?
LADY PRIMLILA?

I...
...REALLY LIKE YOU, MASTER, BUT YOU'RE ALREADY IN LOVE...
SODA! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
GOOD MORNING, MASTER! I HAVE PREPARED BREAKFAST FOR YOU.
VERY SERIOUS
LEAP
MASTER, YOU SMELL SO FRAGRANT.
HOW DAPPER OF YOU TO GO TO BED WEARING PERFUME!
IT'S MY CONSTI-TUTION!
GET OUT OF MY ROOM! NOW!
MY NAME IS SODA, AND I'M AN APOTHECARY. ACTUALLY, I'M JUST AN APPRENTICE.
SLAM
Bad mood in the mornings. Possible low blood pressure or lacking calcium in diet?
I USED TO APPRENTICE UNDER A DIFFERENT BOSS. WHAT A DREARY AND DIFFICULT EXPERIENCE THAT WAS.
THEN, I FOUND MY "TRUE" MASTER!

MY MASTER IS ARGENT, THE ROYAL APOTHECARY!
HE'S THE COURT HEALER. HE HAS PLEDGED HIS KNIGHTLY HEART TO THE PRINCESS.
HIS INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF TOXINS ALLOWS HIM TO USE THEM BOLDLY, WITHOUT FEAR, FOR THE BENEFIT OF MAN!
Apothecarius Argentum
Recipe 5 • Change of Heart

JUMP
I BELIEVE I TOLD YOU TO LEAVE.
SO, WHY ARE YOU STILL HERE?
MASTER! DON'T DO THIS TO ME!
YOU DON'T OWE ME ANY-THING.
PLEASE, I STILL OWE YOU FOR THE EQUIPMENT I DESTROYED! I PLAN ON PAYING OFF MY DEBT THROUGH HARD LABOR!
NO. GET OUT.
WOULD YOU LIKE ANOTHER CUP OF TEA?
...BUT I NEVER SAID I'D TAKE YOU ON AS AN APPRENTICE. GO HOME.
I DID ASK FOR YOUR HELP BEFORE BECAUSE I WAS BUSY...
CRASH
NUTS! I DID IT AGAIN!

GO HOME? I CAN'T GO BACK TO MY OLD BOSS SINCE I QUIT...
PLEASE LET ME STAY! I PROMISE NOT TO GET IN THE WAY OF YOUR "SWEET TIME" WITH THE PRINCESS!
"SWEET TIME?"
YOU CAN'T HIDE IT FROM ME!
I KNOW YOU'RE IN LOVE WITH THE PRINCESS! YOU EVEN SAID HER NAME IN YOUR SLEEP!
SLAM
I'M NOT GOING TO LOSE...
KNOCK KNOCK
YOU PERSIS-TENT BRAT!
WHAT DID YOU CALL ME?
OH, LADY PRIMULA ...

I HAVE LIVED MY ENTIRE LIFE OF 16 YEARS AS THE PRINCESS OF BEAZOL, THINKING ABOUT MY COUNTRY AND MY PEOPLE.
I DECIDED TO VISIT THE RESIDENT HEALER TO SEE HOW HIS NEW BUSINESS WAS DOING...
...ONLY TO BE YELLED AT FOR MY CONCERN.
THIS SOUNDS VAGUELY FAMILIAR...
I REMEMBER TRYING TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH MY FOOD TASTER...
HMMM, I THINK YOU WERE THAT FOOD TASTER...
I APOLOGIZE! I THOUGHT YOU WERE SODA.
SODA?
THE APPRENTICE KID THAT GAVE YOU A DOSE OF SLEEPING POTION, STOLE YOUR RECIPE AND SPREAD RUMORS ABOUT YOU?
Fahh!
He called you a snobby jerk.
HE'S USED EVERY EXCUSE IN THE BOOK IN AN ATTEMPT TO STAY HERE.
YOU SHOULD LET HIM. HE SEEMS LIKE A NICE BOY.

BESIDES, I THINK IT WOULD BE HARD FOR YOU TO MAINTAIN THIS BUSINESS ON YOUR OWN.
I THINK HAVING A HELPING HAND WOULD BE BENEFICIAL.
I CAN HANDLE THINGS BY MYSELF.
YOU ARE SNOOTY.
That kid spoke the truth.
...
...
...
SLAM
MASTER!
LONGLINE
I FOUND A BUNCH OF PATIENTS FOR YOU!
HOPE YOU CAN HANDLE THIS ON YOUR OWN.
...
...

THAT NEEDS TO BE DISINFECTED.
IT'S GOING TO STING.
I WAS SURPRISED! THE PAIN DISAPPEARED AS SOON AS I TOOK THE POTION!
MY RASHES DISAP-PEARED IN A WEEK!
NO WONDER HE'S THE COURT HEALER. I NEVER THOUGHT HE WOULD BE SO TALENTED.
IT'S NO SURPRISE THAT PEOPLE DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT HIM.
AFTER ALL, HE USED TO LIVE ALONE IN THE FOREST. HE ONLY HAD A HANDFUL OF CLIENTS AT THE EDGE OF TOWN...

MA'AM! ARE YOU HAVING A HEART ATTACK...?!
UNGH!
HANG ONTO ME, GRANDMA.
STAGGER STAGGER
IT'S A VERY LONG STORY...
MS. CARLSS-LOTT? YOU'RE NEXT.
YOUR HEART SKIPPED A BEAT?
IT'S JUST THAT THE HEALER IS SO HANDSOME...
I'M FINE...
A FEW YEARS AGO, I FELL OUT OF A CARRIAGE. EVER SINCE THEN, I CAN'T MOVE MUCH. I SPEND MOST OF MY TIME IN BED.
I WAS TOLD THAT I WOULDN'T GET ANY BETTER...
RECENTLY, I'VE BEEN SUFFERING FROM NAUSEA AND DIZZINESS. I CAN BARELY GET OUT OF BED ANYMORE...
WHAT'S WRONG, MA'AM?

MEDICATION WON'T FIX YOUR LEGS.
EVEN YOU CAN'T FIX THEM, EH?
BUT...YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO WALK IF YOU TRAIN THEM PROPERLY.
IT'S JUST MUSCULAR ATROPHY.
REALLY?
IT'LL TAKE SOME DETERMINATION AND PERSISTENCE ON YOUR END.
THAT'S GREAT, LADY!
THAT'S WONDERFUL! I'LL DO MY BEST, SIR!
THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE GOING ON WITH YOU.
CAN YOU THINK OF ANY REASON WHY?
NO, NOTHING ...
EXCUSE ME.
!

MASTER, IS IT SERIOUS?
...
...
THANK YOU SO MUCH, SIR.
IT COULD BE CHRONIC GASTROENTERITIS. WE'LL START BY GIVING YOU SOME MEDICATION.
THAT'S PROBABLY YOUR FAULT.
RAPID PULSE...
!
MS. CARLSLOTT!
I FOUND A LOOSE HAIR ON YOUR SHOULDER.

TODAY WAS ANOTHER BUSY DAY!
I LOVE WATCHING PEOPLE'S WORRIED FROWNS TURN INTO A SMILE AS THEY LEAVE WITH HOPE.
SODA, I THINK YOU'RE MOTIVATED, AND I'M SURE YOU WILL MAKE A FINE HEALER SOMEDAY.
I JUST CAN'T ALLOW YOU TO APPRENTICE WITH ME.
WHY?
I TOLD YOU ABOUT MY CONDITION BEFORE.
I KNOW YOU'RE A SUPER TOXIC HUMAN, RIGHT?
TAKE A LOOK.
W-I-L-T
COOL! THAT'S LIKE A MAGIC TRICK!
SODA...

I KNOW. YOU WANT TO TELL ME YOU'RE DANGEROUS TO BE AROUND.
I CAN'T BE A HEALER IF I'M AFRAID OF POISON!
HE DID EAT FOXGLOVE TO SEE THE EFFECTS FIRSTHAND BEFORE...
IN MY NORMAL STATE, I CAN MAKE SURE YOU DON'T COME IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH ME.
I CAN ALSO CONTROL MY TOXICITY.
HOWEVER, I CAN'T GUARANTEE THAT I WON'T POISON YOU BY ACCIDENT IN THE FUTURE.
THE MORE TIME YOU SPEND WITH ME THE MORE THE RISK INCREASES
I'VE ALMOST KILLED THE PRINCESS TWICE.
HOW?
HOW? UH...
WELL, MY MOUTH TOUCHED HERS...
?
OH MY GOD ARGENT! YOU KISSED THE PRINCESS!

CREAK
YOU CAN STAY HERE UNTIL YOU FIND ANOTHER PLACE TO LIVE, BUT YOU'RE NOT MY APPRENTICE.
...
...
ARGENT ...
SNEEZE!
I'M SORRY, ARGENT! I DIDN'T MEAN TO TEASE YOU!
SLAM
BAM
BAM
BAM
I HAVE SOME RESEARCH TO DO.
GO AHEAD AND SLEEP.
HE'S HANDSOME AND GENEROUS...
HE DOESN'T SEEM DANGEROUS TO ME...
A BASILISK, HUH...
I REMEMBER READING ABOUT THEM IN MY LATE FATHER'S BOOK!
HERE IT IS!

"POISON IS AN EQUALIZER THAT GIVES THE WEAK AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE LETHAL."
"ACONITUM, ARSENIC, ANTIMONY...
POISONING HAS BEEN THE CAUSE OF DEATH FOR A COUNTLESS NUMBER OF POWERFUL FIGURES..."
"NATURALLY OCCURRING TOXINS AND POISONS HAVE GREATLY INFLUENCED HUMAN HISTORY."
A COUNTRY IN THE NORTH GATHERS BABIES TO RAISE AS ASSASSINS. THEY FEED THE CHILDREN POISON AND TEACH THEM...
...SKILLS TO CONTROL THEIR TOXICITY.
THOSE THAT SURVIVE EMANATE A FRAGRANCE REMINISCENT OF POISONOUS BLOOMS AND THEIR HAIR WILL FADE TO SILVER.
I SEE...
THE MAJORITY WILL DIE FROM POISONING DURING THEIR TRAINING.
THEIR TOXIC CONDITION CANNOT BE REVERSED, AND AS A RESULT, THEY ARE UNABLE TO REJOIN SOCIETY...
...TO SERVE AS FOOD TASTERS AND ASSASSINS. THEY WERE OFTEN KILLED AFTER THEY ACCOMPLISHED THEIR TASK.
CALLED THE "BASILISK" AFTER THE LEGENDARY MONSTER DUE TO THEIR HIGHLY TOXIC CONSTITUTION, THEY ARE SOLD TO POWERFUL MEN ..

KISSING SOMEONE WOULD MEAN KILLING THEM...
THAT MEANS HE CAN'T REALLY EXPRESS HIS LOVE.
HE NEEDS TO MAINTAIN DISTANCE WITH PEOPLE HE CARES ABOUT...
DID ARGENT...
...TELL ME TO LEAVE BECAUSE HE CARES ABOUT ME?
THESE CRYSTALS MEAN ..

SODA...
ABOUT MS. CARLSLOTT...
YEAH?
I NEED TO BRING HER MORE MEDICATION. DO YOU HAVE HER ADDRESS?
I'LL TAKE YOU THERE.
DON'T WORRY. I WON'T HOLD THIS OVER YOUR HEAD OR ANYTHING.
SHE LIVES IN A SMALL CABIN...
...SO THE LITTLE GRANDKIDS DON'T BOTHER HER.
OH SODA! I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE GOING TO BRING ARGENT!
YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME. I WOULD HAVE APPLIED MAKEUP AND DRESSED FOR THE OCCASION!
DON'T WORRY! THAT WOULDN'T HAVE MADE MUCH OF A DIFFERENCE.
HOW ARE YOU FEELING?
KNOCK
I'VE BEEN FEELING BETTER. I HAVE TO USE THE RESTROOM FREQUENTLY, THOUGH.

THAT MEANS THE MEDICATION IS WORKING.
I SEE.
YOU MUST GET LOTS OF REST.
I WANTED TO BRING MORE MEDICATION AND GIVE YOU SOME INSTRUCTION ON LIFESTYLE ADJUSTMENTS.
SUCH AS YOUR DAILY FOOD INTAKE.
I EAT WHAT MY DAUGHTER-IN-LAW MAKES FOR ME.
I'M NOT HUNGRY, SO I HAVEN'T EATEN TODAY.
I SEE...
YOU SHOULD NOT EAT TOO MUCH.
YOU SHOULD ALSO REFRAIN FROM EATING SWEETS.
I KNOW, BUT MY DAUGHTER-IN-LAW DOES HER BEST TO HELP ME GET BETTER.
SHE GOES OUT OF HER WAY TO MAKE ME FOOD. I CAN'T REFUSE TO EAT ANYTHING SHE MAKES.
FINE!
I'LL EAT THE SWEETS FOR YOU!

AWWWW!
WHAT A GOOD APPETITE!
YOU WANTED TO EAT THAT, DIDN'T YOU?
YES, IT'S MY FAVORITE.
HEY, MUM!
THAT'S MY DAUGHTER-IN-LAW. SHE'S BACK FROM TENDING THE FARM.
MUM, DO YOU HAVE VISITORS?
AH, HELLO!
WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE?
HE IS ARGENT, THE NEW ROYAL APOTHECARY.
I'm the apprentice!
ROYAL FAMILY CERTIFIED

I APPRECIATE YOUR CONCERN, BUT WE'VE GOT OUR HANDS FULL HERE.
MY HUSBAND PASSED AWAY A FEW MONTHS AGO, AND WE JUST MOVED HERE.
UH, I DRAGGED HER OVER THERE MYSELF RECENTLY.
THE ROYAL APOTH-ECARY? I HAVEN'T HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT THAT.
Pastry Sales Tactic
MS. CARLSLOTT IS STILL HEALTHY.
WITH TIME, SHE'LL BE ABLE TO WALK AGAIN.
YOU CAN PAY ME WHENEVER YOU HAVE THE FUNDS. I WON'T TROUBLE YOU.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HER.
YOU COULD HAVE GIVEN ME A BITE!
THAT'S NOT FAIR! YOU ATE ALL THE SWEETS!
I'LL DROP BY AGAIN.

WHY? ARE YOU MAD? I'M SORRY I SAID YOU WERE A SNOB.
THAT'S NOT IT.
PLEASE, PACK UP YOUR THINGS AND LEAVE.
THAT'S FOR FINDING CLIENTS FOR ME. THAT SHOULD BE ENOUGH TO LIVE ON FOR A WHILE.
!
TINK
YOU STILL HAVE TIME TO CHANGE YOUR MIND.
YOU'RE STILL A CHILD. YOU MAY NOT UNDERSTAND QUITE YET, BUT IT'S NOT POSSIBLE TO SAVE EVERYONE.
THERE AREN'T POTIONS THAT WILL HEAL IN ALL CIRCUM-STANCES.
BESIDES, I CAN'T GUARAN-TEE YOUR SAFETY IF YOU'RE WITH ME.
I TOLD YOU I'M NOT AFRAID OF POISON!
IF I COULD...
...I WOULD TAKE POISON AND TRAIN LIKE YOU DID!

"DON'T YOU WANT TO COME WITH ME?"
"IT'S A SIMPLE ENOUGH JOB. YOU JUST HAVE TO TASTE MY DAUGHTER'S FOOD BEFORE SHE DOES."
"YOU'LL BE ABLE TO EAT LIKE A KING EVERY DAY."
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT! DON'T EVER SAY THAT AGAIN!
"IF YOU REFUSE, I'LL KILL YOU RIGHT NOW FOR YOUR INSOLENCE."

"THE ONLY WAY TO LIVE IS FOR YOU TO EAT POISON..."
"DON'T YOU WANT TO LIVE?"
"YOU DON'T WANT TO DIE, DO YOU?"
"YOU HAVE NO OTHER WAY!"
IT'S BEEN ONE WEEK.
I WONDER IF ARGENT HAS GIVEN UP BY NOW!
OH?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HE FINALLY KICKED ME OUT FOR GOOD!

I THINK I REALLY TICKED HIM OFF THIS TIME!
HE'S CLOSED THE SHOP AND HE WON'T OPEN THE DOOR NO MATTER HOW MUCH I KNOCK
YOU'VE HAVEN'T SPENT ANY OF HIS MONEY WHILE SLEEPING OUTSIDE?
I THINK ARGENT WILL NEVER TAKE ME BACK IF I SPEND HIS MONEY.
THIS KID'S ALSO PRETTY STUBBORN ...
I THINK WHAT YOU SAID WAS PROBABLY VERY PAINFUL TO ARGENT...
I DON'T KNOW THE TRAINING THAT BASILISKS HAVE TO GO THROUGH.
ARGENT WON'T TALK ABOUT IT.
"I'M SURE IT'S QUITE HORRIFIC."
GOOD DAY, MS. CARLSS-LOTT!
ARGENT!
I NEED TO FINISH KNITTING A LITTLE MORE.
WHY DON'T YOU HAVE SOME MORE OF YOUR FAVORITE SWEETS?

THANK YOU, I WILL.
"JUST BECAUSE HE'S USED TO POISON DOESN'T MEAN HE DOESN'T SUFFER THE EFFECTS."
"A FATAL DOSE CAUSES SUFFERING IN HIS CASE, NOT DEATH. IN THAT RESPECT, IT MAY BE HARDER ON HIM DUE TO THE EXTENDED SUFFERING."
THE ONLY THING I CAN DO NOW IS KNIT.
WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, I COULD EASILY DO MEN'S WORK OUT IN THE FIELD.
NOW THAT BOTH MY HUSBAND AND SON HAVE DIED...
NAUSEA SO SEVERE, YOU THINK YOU'RE TURNING INSIDE-OUT.
BREATHLESS-NESS SO SEVERE YOU FEEL YOU'RE DROWNING.
THOSE ARE SOME OF THE SYMPTOMS OF POISONING.
BAD VERTIGO TO THE POINT WHERE YOU DON'T KNOW UP FROM DOWN. RINGING IN THE EARS, WEAK PULSE...
"I'M SORRY, PRINCESS. I JUST DON'T HAVE AN ANSWER."

"I DON'T HAVE ANY FAVORITE FLOWER OR FOOD."
"I CAN TELL YOU WHAT I DON'T LIKE."
ARGENT ...
ARGENT!
I'M SORRY.
WE SHOULD GET STARTED ON YOUR WALKING EXERCISE.
MAYBE I'M BEING GREEDY.
I USED TO SUPPORT MY FAMILY, BUT NOW I KNOW I'VE BECOME A BURDEN.
YET, I STILL WANT TO BE WITH THEM.
I'VE ALSO MET LOVELY PEOPLE LIKE YOU BECAUSE I'M STILL ALIVE!
I SWEAR, I'M AWARE OF THE RISKS!

I CAN'T BE AN APOTHECARY IF I'M AFRAID OF POISONS!
YOU'RE RIGHT.
YOU COULD VERY WELL OVERCOME FEAR AND FEAR OF POISON IN THE END.
THERE'S SOMETHING A LOT WORSE.
IT'S YOUR HEART BECOMING POISONED.
THAT'S WHAT ARGENT FEARS THE MOST.
SLAM
I DON'T GET IT!
I UNDERSTAND WHY YOU RESPECT HIM SO MUCH.
IN FACT, I THINK YOU'LL BE GOOD FOR HIM.
I JUST MIGHT GO OUT ON A LIMB FOR YOU.
REALLY, PRINCESS? YOU'RE SMARTER THAN I THOUGHT!
I thought you were an airhead!

YOU ALWAYS SAY A LITTLE TOO MUCH, KIDDO.
That hurts -
MUM? SIR?
I'VE BEEN HERE TOO LONG. I SHOULD GET GOING.
NO, NOT AT ALL.
MUM HAS BECOME A LOT BETTER, THANKS TO YOU.
I THOUGHT I WOULD INVITE YOU TO DINNER TO SHOW MY APPRECIA-TION.
BUT...
THAT'S A GREAT IDEA I'D LOVE TO HAVE YOU EAT DINNER HERE.
YOU LIVE ALONE, RIGHT?
IT'S GOOD TO EAT WITH OTHERS EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE.
THAT'S TRUE.
YOU SHOULD DINE WITH US, MUM.
I'LL EAT LATER. I WANT TO FINISH KNITTING FIRST.
I'LL SEE YOU LATER, THEN.

ARGENT! ARGENT!
I DON'T THINK HE'S HERE
Looks like he left through the back door.
MAYBE HE'S OVER AT MS. CARLSLOTT'S HOUSE.
WHO?
IT WAS A PATIENT I BROUGHT OVER. SHE ADORED ARGENT FROM THE GET-GO.
ARGENT SEEMS TO LIKE HER, AND HE EVEN EATS ALL HER SWEETS, SAYING IT'S HIS FAVORITE!
HIS FAVORITE? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.
ACTUALLY, AS A FORMER FOOD TASTER, HE'S NOT FOND OF SWEETS.
A LOT OF ASSASSINS POISON SWEET FOODS.
IT MAKES THE FLAVOR EASIER TO HIDE.
"I DON'T LIKE SWEETS AND..."
WHAT WERE HER SYMPTOMS LIKE?

NAUSEA, FATIGUE AND LACK OF APPETITE...
ARGENT TOOK HER HAND AND TOLD HER IT MIGHT BE CHRONIC GASTROENTERITIS. WHY?
SODA, PLEASE TAKE ME TO HER HOUSE. NOW!!
I ENJOYED THE DINNER.
I'VE PREPARED DESSERT FOR YOU.
I'M NOT SURE IF IT WILL SUIT YOUR TASTE, BUT...
MS. CARLSLOTT!
HELLO, SODA. WHO IS SHE?
I'M PRINCESS PRIMULA.

I'M SORRY TO BARGE IN LIKE THIS WHILE YOU'RE RESTING.
HER FINGER-NAILS...
IS ARGENT THE ROYAL APOTH-ECARY HERE?
HE'S WITH MY DAUGHTER-IN-LAW HAVING SLIPPER.
EXCUSE ME!
A PIE! YUM! I HAVEN'T EATEN ANY IN A WHILE!
HERE YOU GO, SIR.
THIS IS FOR THE APOTHECARY. YOU KIDS CAN HAVE SOME LATER.
ARGENT, DON'T EAT THAT!

YOU MEAN THE PRINCESS? PRINCESS PRIMULA?
LADY PRIMULA?
I WAS TALKING TO SODA WHEN I FIGURED THINGS OUT.
WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, MY LADY?
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO FEED ARGENT?!
WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I'D DO SUCH A THING!
YOU'VE BEEN POISONING YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW?
SNEAK
CAN YOU EAT THAT DESSERT IN FRONT OF ME?
YOU MUST BE KIDDING, LADY PRIMULA!

NO!
SLAP
WAAH
I'M SO SORRY!
YOU'VE BEEN POISONING HER WITH ARSENIC!
LADY PRIMULA
I KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT MEDICINE, BUT I'M QUITE KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT POISONS. I'VE SUFFERED THROUGH ARSENIC POISONING MANY TIMES BEFORE I HAD A FOOD TASTER.
ARSENIC TOXICITY CAN MANIFEST AS WHITE LINES WHICH CAN INDICATE THE LENGTH OF POISONING.
TESTING THE HAIR GIVES INDICATION OF THE DOSE.
ARGENT REALIZED WHAT YOU WERE DOING. HE'S BEEN GIVING HER AN ANTI-DOTE...
...WHILE EATING THE POISONED DESSERTS THAT YOU'VE BEEN MAKING FOR YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW FOR THE LAST FEW DAYS.

AFTER EATING POISON FOR A WEEK, YOU MUST BE FEELING QUITE ILL.
ARGENT, YOU DON'T HAVE TO KEEP DOING THIS.
EXPLAIN WHY YOU'VE ATTEMPTED TO *KILL YOUR MOTHER* AS WELL AS MY APOTHECARY!
HE WAS JUST TOO GOOD.
THINK ABOUT THE FAMILY THAT HAS TO KEEP CARING FOR THESE INVALIDS, EVEN IF THEY GET BETTER!
YOU'RE MISTAKEN TO THINK WE WANT THEM TO GET BETTER!
YOU'RE SICK...

I'VE LOST MY HUSBAND! I HAVE YOUNG KIDS AND AN OLD, INVALID WOMAN TO FEED!
I LOST MY HUSBAND DURING THE LAST BORDER DISPUTE!
WAAHHH!
I HAD TO MAKE A CHOICE
I'M SICK?! WHY DO YOU THINK WE'RE SUFFERING?
BAABB
YOU THINK MONEY SOLVES EVERY-THING?
EVERYONE THAT LOST FAMILY MEMBERS RECEIVED MONETARY COMPENSATION.
IN THE END, OUR WHOLE VILLAGE WAS BURNED TO THE GROUND, AND WE BARELY ESCAPED WITH OUR LIVES.
YOU THINK THAT MONETARY COMPENSA-TION WAS ENOUGH TO MAKE UP FOR ALL OF THAT?
OUR HOMES AND LAND FOLLOWED ...
THEN THE WAR STOLE OUR MEN.
WE GAVE FOOD AND OUR MONEY IN THE FORM OF TAXES FOR THAT WAR.

YOU'RE STILL A PRIVILEGED LITTLE GIRL!
CREAK
MUM!
I WANTED TO HAVE DINNER WITH MY FAMILY.
CLIK CLAK
WHAT A WASTE!

SLATTER
STOP!
NO! DON'T EAT THAT!
DON'T, MS. CARLS-LOTT!
ALLOW ME TO ENJOY MY LAST DESSERT!
SHOVE
I'M TALKIN' TO THE BOTH.
...OF YOU.
I ALSO WANT TO THANK YOU BOTH.
YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD ME EARLIER.
I TOLD YOU I WAS AS STRONG AS A MAN!

I FEEL LIKE A PRINCESS IN YOUR ARMS.
MS. CARLSLOTT!
I CAN FEEL ...
...MY HEART FLUTTER-ING..
MS. CARLS-LOTT...?
SEE? EVEN SHE ACCEPTED HER FATE.
SHE WENT WILL-INGLY.
I'M RELIEVED!

ARGENT, STOP! HOLD YOUR ANGER BACK!
DON'T LET HER POISON YOUR HEART!
KYAAHH!
SLAMM
HOW COULD YOU?!

HOW DARE YOU TRY TO KILL MY MASTER!
HOW COULD YOU DO THAT TO YOUR OWN FAMILY!
HOW DARE YOU TALK LIKE THAT TO LADY PRIMULA!
SHUT UP! I DON'T WANNA HEAR ANOTHER WORD FROM YOU, DAMN BRAT!
SODA!
SLAP
FIRST, I EXPECT A PROPER BURIAL FOR YOUR MOTHER-IN-LAW.
SNIFF SNIFF
YOUR PUNISH-MENT WILL COME AFTER THAT.

ARGENT, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES...
ARGENT, YOU IDIOT!
WHY DID YOU EAT ALL THOSE POISONED FOODS?!
SOMETIMES, TRUTH IS THE DEADLIEST WEAPON.
HE WANTED TO PREVENT THE OLD LADY FROM KNOWING THAT HER FAMILY SHE TRUSTED WAS BETRAYING HER.
RIGHT, ARGENT?
ARGENT WAS HOPING THAT ELLEN MIGHT CHANGE HER MIND.
YOU DID THE SAME DURING YOUR LAST MEAL AS A FOOD TASTER.
YOU WILLINGLY ATE POISON TO HIDE THE BETRAYAL OF THAT WOMAN...
I'M GLAD I FOUND OUT EARLIER THIS TIME.

I STILL COULDN'T SAVE HER.
I FEEL THE SAME WAY.
I'VE BEEN CLUE-LESS ALL THIS TIME!
I HAVE NO RIGHT TO SAY THAT I CONSIDER THE WELL-BEING OF MY PEOPLE!
I HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO EAT MY FILL NEXT TIME...
...WHETHER IT'S POISON OR HARSH REALITY!
I REFUSE TO LET YOU AND OTHERS SWALLOW ALL THE BITTER-NESS!

I'LL DO MY PART!
SODA, YOU ALREADY DID.
I WAS ABLE TO CONTROL MYSELF...
...BECAUSE OF YOUR OUTBURST OF ANGER.
THANK YOU.
I FINALLY UNDER-STOOD...
BRUTAL REALITY BREEDS ANGER, DESPAIR AND HATE.
IT'S A POISON FOR THE HEART THAT HAS NO ANTI-DOTE.
FOR A BASILISK LIKE ARGENT, IT'S A VERY DANGEROUS STATE OF BEING.
...WHAT THE PRINCESS MEANT WHEN SHE TALKED ABOUT ONE'S HEART TURNING TO POISON.
THOSE EMOTIONS WILL DRIVE A SANE MAN TO MADNESS.

PEOPLE COME TO HIM FOR HEALING ...
...BUT HE MAY BE THE ONE IN NEED OF THE SAME.
THE NEXT DAY, MS. CARLSLOTT WAS GIVEN A PROPER FUNERAL.
A SHAWL AND A LETTER?
FLAP
Mommy, look what I found!
THE PRINCESS PARDONED ELLEN.
SHE DID NOT HAVE TO FACE A SEVERE SENTENCE.
LADY PRIMULA FELT THAT ELLEN'S HEART WAS POISONED AND SHE WAS NOT ACTING IN FULL CONSCIENCE.
"ELLEN, I WANT TO THANK YOU EVERY DAY FOR YOUR KINDNESS."
"I WILL TRY TO GET BETTER SOON SO THAT I CAN BE OF MORE HELP."

SODA, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
ALL I COULD DO WAS CRY...
MUM...!
WORK? FOR ME?
REALLY? I WAS GOING TO SEND YOU OUT TO DO A JOB.
I THINK I NEED TO LEAVE.
LADY PRIMULA HAS ORDERED THAT I HIRE AN EMPLOYEE TO HELP ME MAINTAIN A MINIMUM WORKING CONDITION.
YOU NEED TO THANK ME, KIDDO!
I THINK I CAN WORK WITH YOU.
IT'S HARD TO FIND SOMEONE QUICKLY.

REALLY?! THANK YOU, MY LADY!
HUG
THAT'S TRUE!
WE WON'T MAKE MISTAKES IF BOTH OF US ARE WORKING TOGETHER!
BESIDES, I CAN GIVE HIM ADVICE.
MISTAKES? GIVE ADVICE?
MASTER!
I'LL BE AN AMAZING HEALER AND I'LL TURN YOUR BODY BACK TO NORMAL SOON!
SODA ...
DON'T GIVE UP ON YOUR LOVE FOR--
GREAT! LET'S GET STARTED ON WORK!
?
YES, MASTER!
Recipe 5/End

TMK
TMK
TMK
SLICE
DAMMIT! STUPID BRANCH!
I'LL HELP YOU TO THE NEXT VILLAGE.
THANK YOU, YOUNG LADY. WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
ME? UH...
MY NAME IS DAISY!
I'M ON A FOOD TOUR OF THIS COUNTRY!

Apothecarius Argentum

Recipe 6 • Dining with the Sun

The King's Castle at Beazol
[Beazol is a small kingdom located on the corner of the continent.]
I'M SORRY TO CALL YOU ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE!
AS THE RESIDENT APOTHECARY, IT'S MY DUTY TO BE AVAILABLE.
THAT'S WHAT HE SAYS, BUT HE WAS ACTUALLY AFRAID THAT THE PRINCESS WAS UP TO NO GOOD.
SO? HOW'S LADY PRIMULA? DID SHE OVEREAT AGAIN?
SHE...
...DISAPPEARED!
ARGENT THE ROYAL APOTHECARY, PRESENT FOR DUTY!
I'M SODA, THE APOTHECARY'S APPRENTICE.
I am going to do some traveling. Don't come for a while, Please don't worry.
SHE LEFT THIS NOTE AND VANISHED!

I'VE ALREADY GOT MY MEN LOOKING FOR HER UNDER ABSOLUTE SECRECY.
I THOUGHT MAYBE YOU MIGHT HAVE A CLUE.
SHE'S BEEN GONE 3 DAYS. I'M AFRAID SOMETHING MAY HAVE HAPPENED TO HER.
MAYBE IT'S ANOTHER ONE OF HER USUAL OUTINGS?
BOY, TELL ME MORE!
EAR
WHEN DID SHE COME TO THE SHOP?
HM, THE LAST TIME SHE WAS AT THE SHOP, SHE SEEMED... DIFFERENT.
YEAH.
BUT IT'S MY JOB AS AN APPRENTICE.
YOU SEEM BUSY.
I'M OKAY.
I JUST WANTED TO DROP BY, THAT'S ALL.
IT WAS ABOUT 5 DAYS AGO, SO IT WAS BEFORE THE PRINCESS DISAPPEARED.
A JOB ...
I WONDER WHAT MY JOB IS AS A PRINCESS...
HE WON'T BE BACK FOR A WHILE. CAN I HELP YOU?
MY LADY! MY MASTER'S ATTENDING TO SOME PATIENTS.

I'M BOTHERING YOU. I'LL LEAVE.
DO YOU WANT TO LEAVE A MESSAGE?
I REALLY DON'T WANT TO BOTHER YOU.
YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE TO TELL HIM I DROPPED BY.
SHE LOOKED LIKE SHE HAD SOMETHING ON HER MIND...
DID SHE RUN AWAY AGAIN?
RUN AWAY?
MAYBE WHAT ELLEN TOLD HER THE OTHER DAY IS TROUBLING HER.
THE PRINCESS HAS A HABIT OF RUNNING AWAY WHEN SHE'S TROUBLED.
"WE GAVE FOOD AND OUR MONEY IN FORM OF TAXES FOR THAT WAR. THEN THE WAR STOLE OUR MEN, OUR HOMES AND LAND. FOLLOWED IN THE END, OUR WHOLE VILLAGE WAS BURNED TO THE GROUND."
"YOU THINK THE MONETARY COMPENSATION WAS ENOUGH TO MAKE UP FOR ALL OF THAT? YOU'RE STILL A PRIVILEGED LITTLE GIRL!"
I DON'T THINK SHE WOULD GET DEPRESSED OVER SOMETHING LIKE THAT!
She's got nerves of steel
YOU DON'T KNOW MY DAUGHTER!
SHE'S DELICATE AS A SPRING BLOOM!

THIS HAPPENED BECAUSE I DON'T PAY ENOUGH ATTENTION TO HER!
WHO IS THIS GUY?
He bugs me.
HIS ROYAL HIGH-NESS? WHAT? NO WAY...
I VOLUNTEER TO ASSIST IN THE SEARCH FOR LADY PRIMULA.
I THINK THAT'S A GOOD IDEA.
HE'S HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS, THE KING OF BEAZOL.
AS HER FORMER FOOD TASTER, YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND HER AGAIN.
I APPRECIATE YOUR ASSISTANCE, ARGENT.
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE'S THE KING!
MY FORMER BOSS SAID THE KING HAS THE PRESENCE OF A MOUNTAIN AND THE MIND OF A PHILOSOPHER.
WHEN IT COMES TO HIS DAUGHTER, HE'S JUST A MAN.
OTHER-WISE, I WOULD HAVE NEVER MET THE PRINCESS.
That makes sense.

HE IS A COLD AND RUTHLESS MAN, BUT HE'S A DOTING FATHER TO THE PRINCESS.
"DON'T YOU WANT TO COME WITH ME? YOU JUST HAVE TO TASTE MY DAUGHTER'S FOOD BEFORE SHE DOES."
"YOU'LL BE ABLE TO EAT LIKE A KING EVERY DAY."
"IF YOU REFUSE, I'LL KILL YOU RIGHT NOW FOR YOUR INSOLENCE."
THAT HASN'T CHANGED.
CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
CLATTER
WE'RE AT THE PALACE! COME ON!
CLAN
A GARDEN FILLED WITH FLOWERS ...
WHAT WAS THAT FLOWER AGAIN?

SLIP
THIS IS MY CASTLE IN BEAZOL.
YOUR HIGHNESS! HE NEEDS TO REMAIN BOUND. HE MAY BE A CHILD, BUT HE'S A BASILISK!
WHAT IF HE BITES YOU AGAIN? THE SLAVE TRADER TOLD US TO USE EXTREME CAUTION IN HIS VICINITY.
YOU WILL LIVE HERE AS MY DAGHTER'S FOOD TASTER.
...OR WOULD HE RATHER LIVE IN PEACE IN THIS PALACE AND HELP OTHERS?
WOULD HE RATHER LIVE HIS LIFE IN THE SHADOWS AS AN ASSASSIN, ALWAYS ON THE RUN...
I'M SURE HE CAN USE HIS POWERS TO LEAVE.
I FORGOT TO MEN-TION...
THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO BUILD A NEW LIFE.
GOOD BOY.
WHICH WOULD YOU PREFER?

MY DAUGHTER IS DEVASTATINGLY ADORABLE.
I MADE A LOT OF MEDICINE SO I THINK THE SHOP WILL BE ALL RIGHT.
THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET CLOSER TO THE PRINCESS!
Have a great trip!
WATCH THE SHOP FOR ME.
THERE'S NO NEED FOR ME TO GET CLOSER TO LADY PRIMULA...
NO PROBLEMO, MASTER! GOOD LUCK!
WITH WHAT?
WITH... YOU KNOW!
♡
SMACK

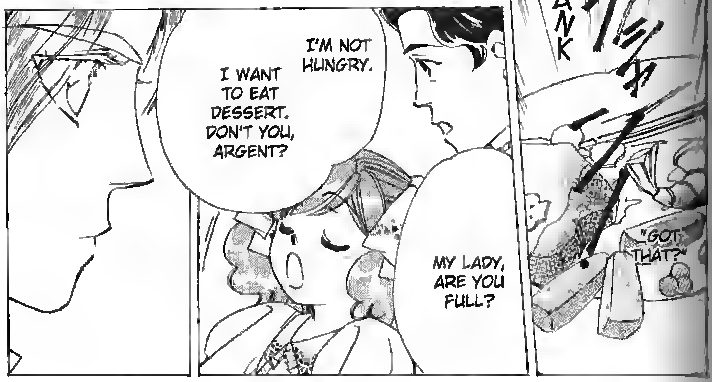
FIRST RULE.
YOU ARE NOT TO TOUCH THE PRINCESS. IF YOU DO, YOU WILL BE EXECUTED IMMEDIATELY.
CLICK
FOUNTAIN OF LIGHT...
IT'S LIKE DINING...
...WITH THE SUN!
I DON'T WANNA!
MY LADY, PLEASE EAT YOUR FOOD!
I DON'T WANT TO TASTE ANYTHING WEIRD OR GET SICK AGAIN! I JUST WANT SHRIMP AND SWEETS!
YOU SHOULDN'T BE SO PICKY!
SEE. EVEN GARNET'S LAUGHING.
I DON'T LIKE THAT STUPID DOLL ANYMORE!

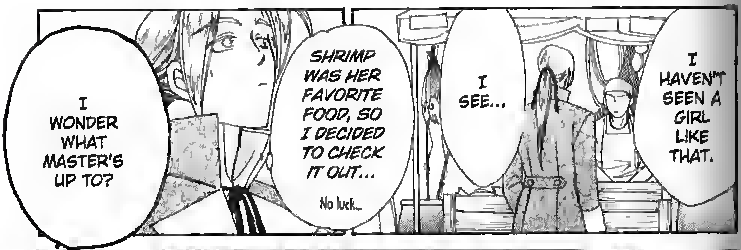
PINOFF
I HEARD HE WAS BACK AT THE CASTLE!
LADY PRIMULA!
DASH
CLARIS, CALL MY DADDY! I WANT TO EAT WITH DADDY!
UNFORTUNATELY ...
PLEASE EXCUSE ME, MY LADY. THE KING HAS LEFT THE PALACE AGAIN.
AGAIN?!
HE WANTED TO PRESENT A GIFT TO YOU, MY LADY.
MY LADY, YOU HAVE COMPANY.
I DON'T WANT ANOTHER DOLL!
HE WILL DINE WITH YOU STARTING TODAY.
YOU WON'T HAVE TO EAT ALONE ANYMORE!
SO THIS IS LADY PRIMULA

NO, PRINCESS! YOU MUST NEVER TOUCH HIM!
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
LOOK AT YOUR SILVER HAIR! SO PRETTY!
YOU ALSO SMELL LIKE PERFUME!
IF YOU TOUCH HIM, YOU'LL GET HURT.
HE'S...A LOWLY SLAVE. HE'S ALSO BEEN AFFLICTED WITH THE "GRIM REAPER'S CURSE."
WHY?
FINE, I'LL GIVE YOU ONE! JUST LIKE I DID WITH GARNET!
YOU DON'T HAVE A NAME?
...
RIGHT. STATE YOUR NAME FOR THE PRINCESS!
CAN I CALL HIM BY HIS NAME?

YOU WILL BE CALLED ARGENT STARTING TODAY!
CLOP
CLOP
WHERE DO I BEGIN MY SEARCH?
CLATTER
THE SEVSEN MARKET HAS THE FRESHEST SEAFOOD!
I'VE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE. LET'S HEAD THAT WAY!
THAT LOOKS DELICIOUS!
THAT LOOKS SO GOOD!
LADY PRIMULA...
I KNOW!
HE EATS FIRST, THEN I GET TO EAT.
IT'S APPROPRIATE MANNERS FOR A MODEST LADY.
CLATTER
IS THAT SO? THAT'S FINE.

I WAS A LOWLY CHAMBERMAID, BUT THE KING SAW MY TALENT AS A NURSE AND AN EDUCATOR AND PROMOTED ME.
I SAY THIS FOR YOUR BENEFIT, MY LADY!
HER ROYAL HIGHNESS, THE QUEEN, PASSED AWAY SHORTLY AFTER THE BIRTH OF MY LADY.
CLARIS IS ALWAYS LIKE THIS.
So bossy!
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS HAS EVEN GIVEN ME PERMISSION TO DISCIPLINE MY LADY LIKE A MOTHER!
ARE ALL MOTHERS LIKE THIS?
WHAT ABOUT YOUR MOTHER?
...
...
HE JUST ARRIVED. HE MUST BE NERVOUS. THAT'S ENOUGH TALKING FOR NOW.
Ladies should be quiet
FINE!
"REMEMBER THAT NOBODY ASIDE FROM THE PRINCESS' CLOSEST SERVANTS KNOW YOUR REAL POSITION."
"THE PRINCESS IS NOT AWARE THAT YOU ARE HER FOOD TASTER."
"YOU ARE HERE TO DINE WITH HER FOR HER PLEASURE."


CLANK
"GOT THAT?"
MY LADY, ARE YOU FULL?
I'M NOT HUNGRY.
I WANT TO EAT DESSERT. DON'T YOU, ARGENT?


I HAVEN'T SEEN A GIRL LIKE THAT.
I SEE...
SHRIMP WAS HER FAVORITE FOOD, SO I DECIDED TO CHECK IT OUT...
No luck...
I WONDER WHAT MASTER'S UP TO?

YOU SHOULD SEND POSTERS OF LADY PRIMULA WITH A LARGE REWARD ALL OVER THE COUNTRY!
Bold move!
WE CAN'T BE SO OPEN.
HER LIFE COULD BE EASILY THREATENED WHILE SHE'S ON THE ROAD. BESIDES, MANY HAVE WANTED HER DEAD SINCE SHE WAS BORN.
SINCE SHE WAS BORN?

DASH
DASH
DASH
CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE THE OFFICE IS?
I AM NEW HERE, AND I BELIEVE I'M LOST.
THIS AREA IS ONLY OPEN TO SENIOR ATTENDANTS!
COME WITH ME.
YOU CANNOT SPEAK TO HIM.
WHAT? WHY...
HE'S THE FOOD TASTER TO THE PRINCESS. ONLY SENIOR ATTENDANTS ARE ALLOWED TO SPEAK WITH HIM.
FOOD TASTER, EH? THE KING MUST BE AT HIS WIT'S END.
CONSIDERING THE PRINCESS' LIFE IS THREATENED WITHIN HIS OWN CASTLE WALLS, HE HAS NO OTHER CHOICE.
THE KING HAD NO HEIR FOR A LONG TIME. PRINCE TIGASON WAS SET TO BE THE NEXT KING WHEN THE QUEEN SUDDENLY BECAME PREGNANT WITH LADY PRIMULA.
I HEAR THE UPSET IN THE LINE OF SUCCESSION DISTRESSED MANY IN THE ROYAL FAMILY, WHOSE PROXIMITY TO THE THRONE WAS DOWNGRADED AS A RESULT.

HOW DARE YOU SPEAK ABOUT SUCH THINGS HERE!
THE SUDDEN PREGNANCY AFTER SO LONG HAS BEEN CONSIDERED RATHER SUSPICIOUS...
I ALSO HEAR THAT SHE MAY NOT BE THE KING'S CHILD.
IF THE PRINCESS WASN'T BORN, THERE WOULDN'T BE SO MUCH STRIFE.
PRINCE TIGASON IS A BETTER CHOICE FOR PEOPLE WHO WANT TO SEE CHANGE.
Those attendants
She's fierce!
THE PRINCESS' POSITION...
AS YOU CAN SEE, HER LIFE IS A COMPLEX AND LONELY ONE.
THERE IS NOTHING WRONG WITH A BLESSING OF A CHILD LATER IN LIFE! DON'T BE RIDICULOUS!
HER FRIENDS ARE MOSTLY DOLLS.
HER ONLY FAMILY, THE KING, IS TOO BUSY TO ATTEND TO HER.
PLEASE FORGIVE US, LADY CLARIS!

I HOPE YOU CAN BECOME HER FRIEND.
TELL ME, ARGENT... WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE FOOD? YOUR FAVORITE FLOWER?
MY ATTENDANT TOLD ME THAT I SHOULD KNOW MORE ABOUT YOU SO WE COULD BE FRIENDS.
I LOVE SHRIMP AND PRIMROSES. WHAT ABOUT YOU, ARGENT?
HEY? WHY WON'T YOU TALK TO ME?
DON'T TOUCH ME!!
W...
WAAAAH
PRIN-CESS...?
I'M SORRY, PRINCESS. I JUST DON'T HAVE AN ANSWER. I DON'T HAVE ANY FAVORITE FLOWER OR FOOD.

I CAN TELL YOU WHAT I DON'T LIKE.
WHAT YOU DON'T LIKE?
I DON'T LIKE SWEETS AND WOLFBANE.
YOU DON'T LIKE SWEETS? HOW STRANGE.
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF WOLFBANE BEFORE.
?
THANKS FOR TELLING ME!
I FINALLY GOT YOU TO TALK TO ME!
PRIMULA IS THE LATIN NAME OF MY MOTHER'S FAVORITE FLOWER.
HAVE YOU EVER SEEN A PRIMROSE?

WHEN SPRING COMES, I'LL SHOW YOU.
WOW! YOU KNOW SO MUCH! THE CASTLE GARDEN IS FULL OF THEM IN THE SPRING!
He spoke...
THOSE FLOWERS ARE PRIM-ROSES...!
SPECIFIC VARIETIES ARE SEDATIVES AND SOME HAVE ANTIDOTAL PROPER-TIES.
IT WAS NAMED PRIMULA BECAUSE IT IS ONE OF THE FIRST FLOWERS TO BLOOM IN SPRING.
ARGENT, WHAT'S WRONG?
...IT MUST BE...
WHEN THE FLOWERS ARE IN FULL BLOOM...
CRASH
AAAAAH!
ARG...
IT MUST BE VERY BEAU-TIFUL...

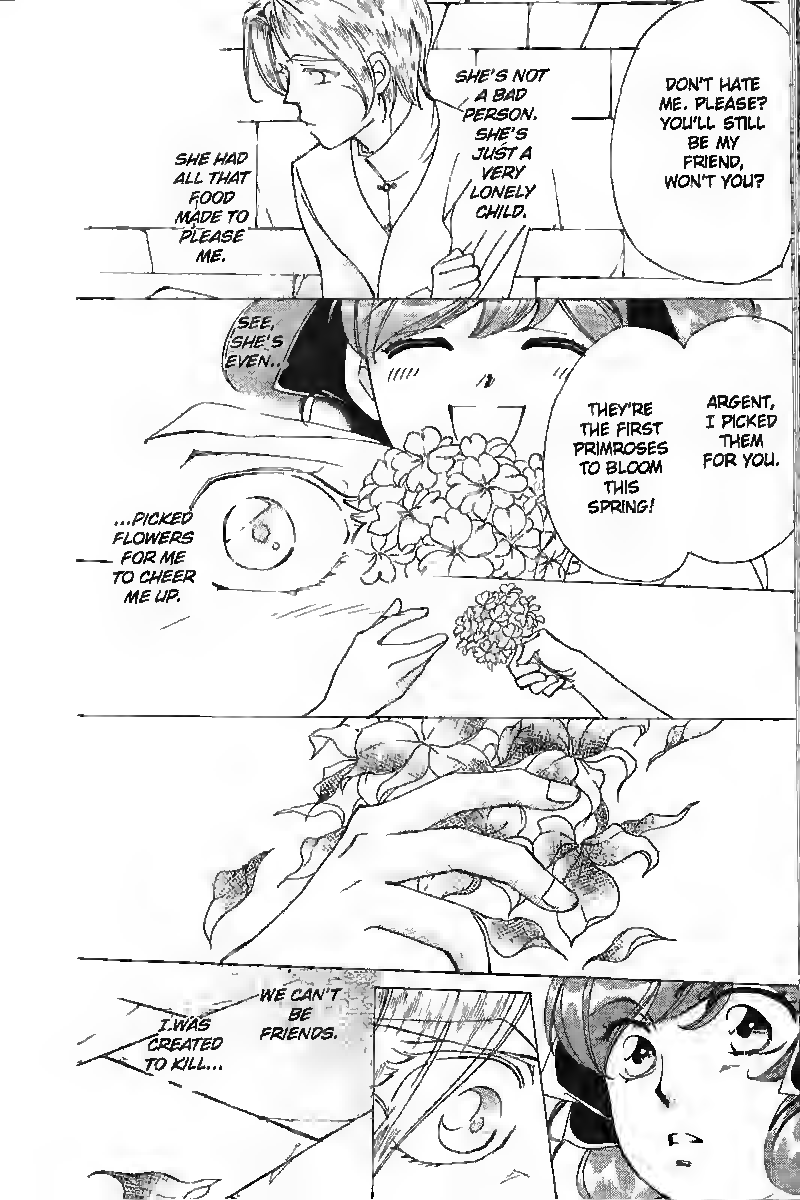
INCREASE SURVEILLANCE I'M SURE THEY WON'T WAIT LONG BEFORE MAKING ANOTHER ATTEMPT.
YES, YOUR MAJESTY.
THEY MUST BE IN A RUSH IF THEY DECIDED TO USE A FAST-ACTING POISON
THEY WERE POISONING HER SLOWLY BEFORE.
THE DILATION OF THE PUPILS INDICATES DATURA POISONING.
HOW'S THE FOOD TASTER?
YOU SAVED MY DAUGHTER.
YOU DID WELL, ARGENT.
THAT'S YOUR JOB, YOU UNDERSTAND?
HE'S A BASILISK, ALL RIGHT.
HE WAS TAKEN ILL, BUT HIS CONDITION IS IMPROVING RAPIDLY.
THE ONLY WAY TO LIVE IS FOR YOU TO EAT POISON...
THAT'S RIGHT.

YOU HAVE NO OTHER WAY!
HAVEN'T SEEN HER.
THERE'RE TONS OF YOUNG GIRLS THAT WOULD FIT THAT DESCRIPTION. ANYTHING MORE YOU CAN SAY ABOUT HER?
SHE'S GOT A HEARTY APPETITE. SHE'S GOOD WITH THE SWORD.
THAT SOUNDS LIKE ONE HELLUVA WIFE!
SHE CHEATED ON YOU AND TOOK OFF, EH?
I UNDERSTAND, BUT DON'T LET ANYONE KNOW ABOUT THE ADULTERY!
ACTUALLY, THERE WAS NO ADULTERY.
THEN WHY ARE YOU LOOKING FOR THIS WOMAN?
SHE'S AN OLD FRIEND.
JUST A FRIEND?
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO SAY?
SHE'S THE PRINCESS AND I'M HER APOTH-ECARY?
SHE'S THE PRINCESS AND I'M HER FORMER FOOD TASTER?

I SEE. I WAS ILL, SO SHE WASN'T ALLOWED TO EAT...
SEE, FASTING FOR 2 DAYS WAS WORTH IT!
I'VE BEEN FASTING AND PRAYING REALLY HARD! I'M STARVING!
CLARIS SAID IF I FASTED AND WISHED HARD FOR YOUR RECOVERY, YOU WOULD GET BETTER!
ARGENT, YOU'RE WELL ALREADY?
I WANTED TO GO SEE YOU, BUT EVERYONE SAID NO. I'M SO HAPPY YOU'RE BETTER!
YES.
I HAD THE CHEF MAKE ALL KINDS OF GOODIES TO CELEBRATE YOUR RECOVERY!
THIS WAY, ARGENT!
YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T LIKE ANYTHING, SO I HAD THEM MAKE ALL KINDS OF FOOD FOR YOU TO TRY.
THIS IS ALL FOR ME?
TRY WHAT-EVER YOU WANT!!

CLINK
CLINK
CLATTER
WHAT'S WRONG?
LADY PRIMULA, I CAN'T...
IT'S BEEN POISONED AGAIN...
YOU DON'T LIKE IT!!
CALL THE CHEF!
HAVE HIM MAKE ANOTHER DISH!
NO, MY LADY! THAT'S NOT THE PROBLEM!
THEN WHY WON'T YOU EAT MORE?
IT'S BECAUSE THE FOOD'S BAD!
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU DID THAT!
THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE THAT WANT TO EAT. THEY JUST CAN'T!
CRASH

HOW DARE YOU TALK TO THE PRINCESS LIKE THAT!
AAAAAHH!
WA...
TRY SOMETHING LIKE THAT AGAIN AND I'LL KILL YOU ON THE SPOT!
CREEEAK
SLAM
ARGENT, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'M SO SORRY. I WAS JUST SURPRISED!
NOBODY HAS EVER YELLED AT ME LIKE THAT BEFORE.
THE PRINCESS HAS SPOILED YOU AND YOU'VE FORGOTTEN YOUR PLACE!


SHE HAD ALL THAT FOOD MADE TO PLEASE ME.
SHE'S NOT A BAD PERSON. SHE'S JUST A VERY LONELY CHILD.
DON'T HATE ME. PLEASE? YOU'LL STILL BE MY FRIEND, WON'T YOU?
SEE, SHE'S EVEN..
...PICKED FLOWERS FOR ME TO CHEER ME UP.
THEY'RE THE FIRST PRIMROSES TO BLOOM THIS SPRING!
ARGENT, I PICKED THEM FOR YOU.
I.WAS CREATED TO KILL...
WE CAN'T BE FRIENDS.

YOU CANNOT COME NEAR ME.
YOU WILL WITHER AND DIE, JUST LIKE THESE FLOWERS.
MY BLOOD AND SKIN HAVE BEEN INFUSED WITH POTENT POISONS. I KILL EVERY LIVING THING I TOUCH...
PRINCESS...
...THIS IS THE "GRIM REAPER'S CURSE."
I WAS BROUGHT HERE TO BE YOUR FOOD TASTER.
I WAS NOT BROUGHT HERE TO BE YOUR FRIEND.
BUT...!
HE'S TELLING THE TRUTH.
SINCE I'M POISONOUS MYSELF, I CAN WITHSTAND THE POISONINGS TO PROTECT YOUR LIFE.
I WAS BOUGHT BY THE KING TO TASTE YOUR FOOD FIRST TO SEE IF IT'S POISONED.
PLEASE, LEAVE ME ALONE.
WHAT'S A FOOD TASTER?

MY LADY, HE WAS RAISED TO BECOME A MONSTROUS ASSASSIN CALLED A BASILISK.
WHY DIDN'T ANYONE TELL ME!
I WAS HURTING ARGENT WITHOUT KNOWING IT!
HE DESERVES NO SYMPATHY FROM YOU.
ARGENT ISN'T A MONSTER!
YOU ONLY SAY THAT BECAUSE YOU'RE UNAWARE OF HIS TRUE NATURE.
AS A FOOD TASTER, HE'S A USEFUL TOOL.
HE WOULD HAVE STARVED TO DEATH AS AN ORPHAN.
HE'S LUCKY TO BE ABLE TO EAT ANYTHING, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER IT'S POISONED OR NOT.
"THAT'S WHY HE SAID...
..."THERE ARE MANY PEOPLE THAT WANT TO EAT. THEY JUST CAN'T!"
EVERYONE HAS A JOB TO DO. YOU HAVE YOUR PLACE, JUST LIKE HE DOES.
IF YOU TAKE AWAY HIS ROLE AS A FOOD-TASTER, HE'LL BE EXECUTED.

I HATE YOU ALL!
LADY PRIMULA!
WE CAN'T LET HIM LIVE. HE'LL BE A DETRIMENT TO HUMANITY.
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT!
FRIENDSHIP HAD NO PLACE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP BACK THEN.
CRACK
CRACK
THAT'S RIGHT.
I don't want to be a princess anymore.
THE PRINCESS FOUND OUT THE TRUTH AND...
...DECIDED TO RUN AWAY SHORTLY AFTERWARDS.
IF SHE LEFT BECAUSE SHE DID NOT WANT THE BURDEN OF HER POSITION...
...SHE MAY NOT WANT TO BE FOUND BY ME OR ANYONE ELSE.

DASH
DASH
DASH
RECRUIT MORE SERVANTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SEARCH!
SHE LEFT ON FOOT. SHE CAN'T BE VERY FAR!
SCRATCH
OUCH!
THUD
THIS IS MY CHANCE TO ESCAPE WHILE...
"WOULD HE RATHER LIVE HIS LIFE IN THE SHADOWS AS AN ASSASSIN, ALWAYS ON THE RUN... OR WOULD HE RATHER LIVE IN PEACE IN THIS PALACE AND HELP OTHERS?"
"WHICH WOULD YOU PREFER?"
THERE'S NO PEACE HERE!
...
...
...
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
...PEOPLE ARE TOO BUSY SEARCHING FOR THE PRINCESS.

SHE'S NOT MY FRIEND...
SHE'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS ANYMORE.
CLACK
THIS DOLL BELONGS TO THE PRINCESS!
PANT
PANT PANT
ARGENT!
SNAP
YOU CAN EAT THIS.
"SORRY, BUT I HAVE ENOUGH MOUTHS TO FEED."
"YOU WANT TO BE MY KID?"
"YOU WANT TO BE A NORMAL GIRL? WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, YOU BRAT?!"
I SAW HOUSES ALONG THE WAY, SO I ASKED THEM...
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. I COULDN'T TRAVEL WHILE I WAS HUNGRY.
THAT'S POISONOUS.
THIS TASTES YUCKY. THAT LOOKS BETTER!

ARGENT, YOU DON'T MIND EATING POISON TO PROTECT ME?
I HAVE NO OTHER WAY TO SURVIVE.
THE KING LOVES YOU VERY MUCH.
OTHERWISE, HE WOULDN'T HIRE A FOOD TASTER FOR YOU.
MY HOME COUNTRY WAS UNSTABLE. MANY PEOPLE DIED FROM THE CONSTANT CONFLICTS.
THERE, I WAS FED POISON ALL MY LIFE.
SHE'S HEARD THE RUMORS...
I HEAR THAT HE MAY NOT EVEN BE MY FATHER.
BESIDES, NOBODY WANTS ME, NOT EVEN MY DADDY.
IF YOU SAID YOU WERE THE PRINCESS, THEY WOULD HAVE WELCOMED YOU.
I DON'T WANNABE ONE ANYMORE, AND I'M QUITTING.
I DON'T WANT MY FRIENDS TO GET HURT BECAUSE OF ME!
EVERYONE TURNED ME AWAY.
I SAW SO MANY PEOPLE THAT COULDN'T EAT, LIKE YOU SAID.

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET HOME.
I DON'T EITHER!
Neither has he
She has rarely left the Castle
IF YOU'RE NOT THE HEIR TO THE THRONE, YOUR LIFE MAY NOT BE IN DANGER ANYMORE.
I CAN'T, ARGENT.
IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BE PRINCESS, YOU SHOULD ASK THE KING.
YOU SHOULD GO BACK.
BESIDES, I CAN'T RETURN TO...
RUSTLE
LADY PRIMULA!
THERE YOU ARE!
WE'RE HERE TO TAKE YOU BACK TO THE CASTLE.
YAAAY! WE'RE SAVED!
STOP!
I CAN SMELL DATURA ON THEM.
DATURA HAS A STRONG FRAGRANCE, SO IT'S EASY TO TELL.

PRINCESS!
ARGENT!
SOMEONE GUARANTEED A LARGE REWARD FOR THE PRINCESS' DEATH!
YOU'VE BEEN POISONING HER FOOD...
THAT'S RIGHT. NOW THAT YOU KNOW...
AAAAAH!

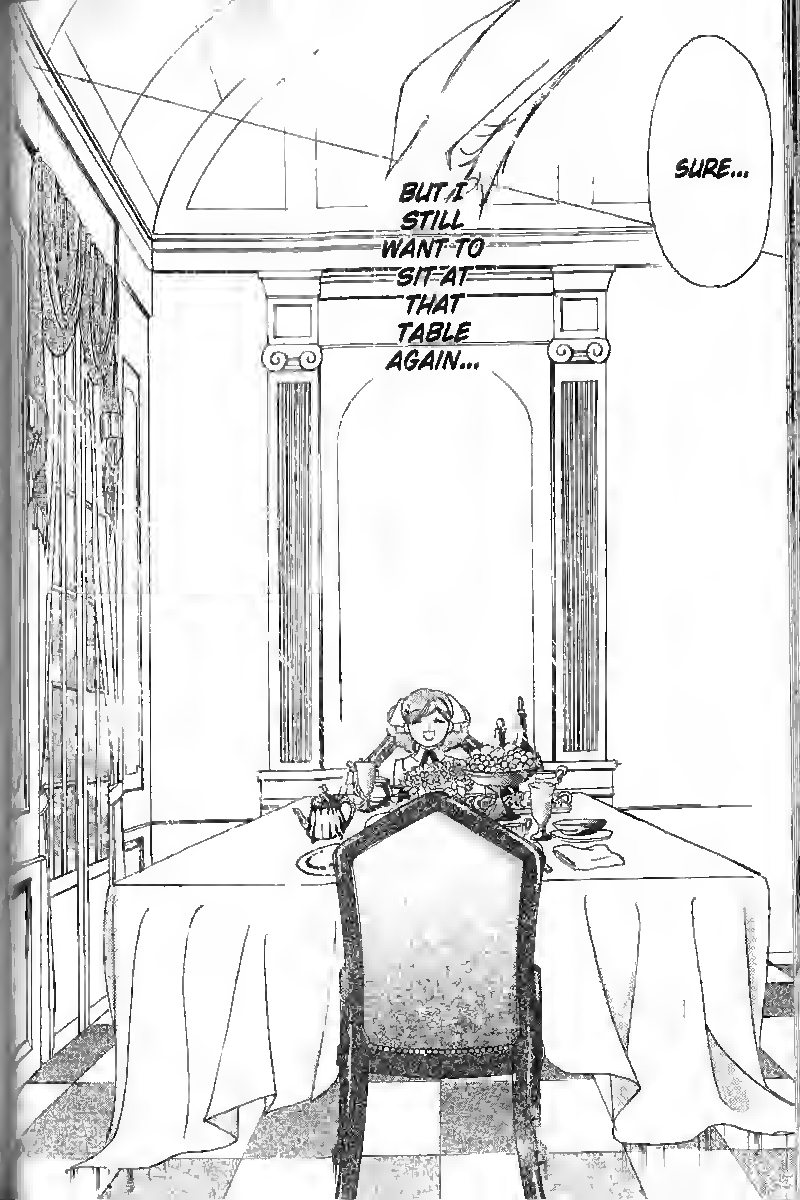
WADER
YOU DIRTY RAT...!
WHO THE HELL IS THIS KID?
YOU PUNK !!!
THIS IS THE ARGENT THAT I KNOW...?
WHOA !!!

THUD
ARGENT!
DON'T TOUCH ME!
MY BLOOD IS TOXIC! YOU'LL GET BURNED...
BUT.. BUT.. YOU'LL DIE!
ARGENT!
DON'T DESPAIR. I WAS DISPOS-ABLE TO BEGIN WITH.
I WAS MADE TO HURT PEOPLE. YOU SAW ME.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. I'D RATHER..
I WON'T LET YOU DIE!
IN THAT CASE...

STAB
...I'LL SEND BOTH OF YOU TO...
...!
I'M SORRY, PRIMULA. YOU'RE SAFE NOW.
WHERE AM I?
...A FIELD OF PRIMROSES.
...AND...

I'M GLAD YOU'RE FINALLY AWAKE!
YOU'VE BEEN HERE THE WHOLE TIME?
UH-HUH!
YOUR HAND...
IT'LL GET BETTER SOON.
YOU'RE GOING TO GET BETTER, TOO.
DON'T STARE AT ME.
WELL, I CAN'T TOUCH YOU, RIGHT?
MY HAIR...
YOU CAN TOUCH MY HAIR.
REALLY?

RU FF LE
I'M GOING TO BE A PRINCESS.
I'M GOING TO BE QUEEN AND MAKE SURE EVERYONE HAS FOOD ONE DAY.
SO...
"IF YOU TAKE AWAY HIS ROLE AS A FOOD-TASTER, HE'LL BE EXECUTED."
"EVERYONE HAS A JOB TO DO. YOU HAVE YOUR PLACE, JUST LIKE HE DOES."
WILL YOU STILL EAT WITH ME?
ALTHOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHY...
I MAY BE POISONED OVER AND OVER.


SURE...
BUT I STILL WANT TO SIT AT THAT TABLE AGAIN...

ABOUT THE GIRL YOU'RE LOOKING FOR...
SORRY, I OVER-HEARD YOU.
A YOUNG LADY HELPED ME WHEN MY CARRIAGE WAS STUCK ON MY WAY HERE.
SHE WAS AN UNUSUAL ONE. SHE CARRIED A SWORD AND SAID SHE WAS ON AN EATING TOUR.
I WANTED TO REPAY HER KINDNESS, AND SHE ASKED FOR FOOD. SHE SAID ANYTHING EDIBLE WAS FINE, EVEN TREE BARK.
LADY PRIMULA!
WHERE DID SHE GO?
RUSTLE
RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE
"SHE SAID SHE WAS TRAVELING ON AN EATING TOUR NEAR THE BORDER."
"THAT AREA GOT BURNED DOWN DURING THE WAR. THERE'S NOTHING THERE!..."
THE PRINCESS WENT TO HAVE HER SHARE...
"I'VE BEEN CLUELESS ALL THIS TIME! I HAVE NO RIGHT TO SAY THAT I CONSIDER THE WELL-BEING OF MY PEOPLE!"
"I HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO EAT MY FILL NEXT TIME..."

SHE WANTED TO EXPERIENCE THE HARD REALITY TO BE A BETTER LEADER!
...WHETHER IT'S POISON OR HARSH REALITY! I REFUSE TO LET YOU AND OTHERS SWALLOW ALL THE BITTERNESS!
WHAT'S WITH THIS PEELING JOB, DAISY?
WHAT? THAT'S STRANGE ...
NO, YOU'RE STRANGE! LOOK AT THE WAY YOU HOLD THE KNIFE!
DON'T HOLD IT LIKE A SWORD! HERE...
LADY PRIMULA! I FOUND YOU!
ARGENT!
LADY PRIMULA? THE PRINCESS?

WE WERE UNAWARE OF YOUR IDENTITY, MY LADY. PLEASE FORGIVE OUR RUDENESS!
YOU SHOULD HAVE TOLD US THAT YOU WERE HERE FOR INSPECTION.
NO, I WAS HERE AS A LEARNING EXPERIENCE.
I should apologize for being a burden to everyone...
BUT...
I SAID THERE'S NO NEED TO APOLOGIZE! YOU MAY SPEAK FREELY!
NO WONDER YOU'RE KIND OF USELESS!
I HEARD THE PRINCESS WAS A HUGE, BEAR-LIKE WOMAN, BUT SHE'S ACTUALLY A NORMAL GIRL!
Because you don't like public appearances!
A bear?
I'M SORRY TO HAVE WORRIED YOU.
I WANTED TO LOOK AT MY COUNTRY WITH MY OWN EYES. THEY SEEMED TO NEED HELP, SO I DIDN'T LEAVE, AND MY STAY JUST KIND OF DRAGGED ON...
YOU SHOULD HAVE TALKED TO ME FIRST.
I THOUGHT ABOUT IT, BUT YOU HAVE AN IMPORTANT JOB AS AN APOTHECARY.

I NEEDED TO DO THIS AS A PRINCESS, BUT...
...IT WAS ALSO FUN TO BE DAISY.
MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE...
...COME TO LOOK FOR HER.
MAYBE SHE WANTS TO HAVE AN ORDINARY LIFE?
THANK YOU FOR COMING!
I WAS ABOUT TO SEND FOR YOU SOON.
THERE'RE LOTS OF PEOPLE THAT ARE INJURED AND ILL. ARGENT, PLEASE ATTEND TO THEM.
IT'S AN ORDER!
AS YOU WISH.

Apothecarius Argentum

Recipe 7: Dinner With Darkness

Inside the King's Castle at Beazol.
300 BOARDS OF LUMBER, 50 BLANKETS, AND VARIOUS FOOD SUPPLIES MUST BE LOADED UP *IMMEDIATELY*!
IT'S AN *ORDER* FROM LADY PRIMULA!
ARGENT THE PALACE APOTHECARY HAS REQUESTED ADDITIONAL SUPPLIES OF CLEAN CLOTH AND COTTON.
WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
SIR CARLI IS OBSERVANT.
Although he ain't see very well...
YES, SIR.
Enlarged
STOP! THIS BLANKET'S *DAMAGED*. PLEASE PATCH UP THE TEAR.
!

I NEVER WOULD HAVE THOUGHT SHE HAD DISAPPEARED TO OBSERVE THE FORMER BATTLEFIELDS OF THE BORDER DISPUTE WITH NAVARA.
I THOUGHT SHE HAD RUN AWAY AGAIN.
I'M IMPRESSED THAT SHE MADE IT THERE BEFORE I DID.
MAYBE SHE'S STARTING TO TAKE HER ROYAL DUTIES MORE SERIOUSLY.
WELL, THIS SOLVES ONE OF OUR PROBLEMS.
NOT YET.
THE REPORT STATED THAT THE AREA WAS RECOVERING QUICKLY, AND WE WERE SENDING AN ABUNDANCE OF SUPPLIES.
CONSIDERING THE NEW INFORMATION, IT SEEMS SOMEONE WAS BEING DISHONEST BEFORE.
WHO IS IN CHARGE OF SENDING THE SUPPLIES?
ZIRCON, EH...?
THERE WAS A SABOTAGE ATTEMPT DURING THE HARVEST FESTIVAL. HE WAS IN CHARGE OF SUPPLIES, WASN'T HE?
ARGON, START AN IMMEDIATE INVESTI-GATION.
CONSUL ZIRCON.

HE COULD BE A MEMBER OF THE REBELLION THAT'S MADE ATTEMPTS TO ASSASSINATE MY DAUGHTER BEFORE.
Former battlefield between Navara and Beazol.
WHO'S NEXT?
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
THE INFLAMMATION SHOULD SUBSIDE IN 2-3 DAYS.
HE'S SKILLED. NO WONDER HE'S THE ROYAL APOTHECARY.
I COULDN'T STOP MYSELF... I'M SORRY!
I ASKED FOR THESE TO BE JULIENNED, NOT CHOPPED!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!
ON THE OTHER HAND, LADY PRIMULA...

CLANK CLANK
IT WAS NICE OF HER TO SEND SUPPLIES RIGHT AWAY AFTER HER INSPECTION.
IT'S TOO LITTLE TOO LATE IF YOU ASK ME...
...
...
...
COOKING AND SWORDSMANSHIP ARE TOTALLY DIFFERENT SKILLS, ALTHOUGH THEY BOTH USE SHARP BLADES.
DON'T TRY SO HARD. JUST PAY MORE ATTENTION TO OVERSEE THE AID COMING TO THIS AREA.
I DON'T WANT TO JUST WATCH OTHER PEOPLE WORK.
I'M DONE.
NOW, IT'S MY TURN!
YOU'VE BEEN TOO BUSY TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF, LET ME BRUSH YOUR HAIR.
YOU SAID I COULD TOUCH YOUR HAIR!
JUST SHUT UP AND SIT DOWN!
A princess has the right to harass you!
NO.
C'MON, I JUST WANT TO PLAY WITH YOUR HAIR!
THANKS, BUT NO THANKS.
I'm not a doll.

DID YOU GROW OUT YOUR HAIR BECAUSE OF WHAT I SAID?
I USED TO BRUSH YOUR HAIR ALL THE TIME WHEN WE WERE KIDS.
I DON'T THINK SO...
I DON'T CARE HOW MY HAIR LOOKS!
YOUR HAIR IS SO PRETTY!
STOP SQUIRMING! I EVEN GOT YOU A NEW OUTFIT!
YOU SHOULD GROW IT LONG! I'LL BRUSH IT EVERY DAY FOR YOU.

HE'S LIKE YOUR DOLL!
I NEVER SHOULD HAVE LET HER TOUCH MY HAIR.
I'M DONE!! ARGENT, YOU LOOK WONDERFUL!
HE LOOKS LIKE A PRINCE IN A FAIRY TALE!
HE LOOKS MUCH BETTER THAN TRILDAN, MY COUSIN. DON'T YOU THINK, CLARIS?
I THINK HE LOOKS GREAT, MY LADY.
NO!
TUG
I'M JUST A FOOD TASTER. THERE'S NO NEED FOR ME TO DRESS UP.
WE HAVE A SPECIAL GUEST COMING TODAY.
UNCLE TIGASON, IT'S BEEN TOO LONG!
LADY PRIMULA! MY, YOU'VE GROWN!

WHO IS THIS YOUNG MAN?
I'M...
THIS IS ARGENT. LAST YEAR, HE WAS INVITED TO LIVE HERE AS THE PRINCESS' COMPANION.
ARGENT, THIS IS MY BROTHER, TIGASON. HE'S THE DIRECTOR OF THE ROYAL TREASURY.
HOW DO YOU DO, ARGENT? YOU CERTAINLY LOOK LIKE A PRINCE.
SO THIS IS PRINCE TIGASON. HE WAS THE HEIR TO THE THRONE BEFORE THE PRINCESS' BIRTH.
EXCUSE ME, DEAR!
OH LET ME INTRO-DUCE MY FAMILY.
THIS IS DERMOBEDE, MY WIFE, AND TRILDAN, MY SON.

I'm glad I'm not in the line of succession
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN TOO KIND.
I CAN'T IMAGINE THE PAINS OF BEING A KING.
I'M DIRECTING THE FINANCES, BUT I CAN'T KEEP UP WITH ALL THE DEMANDS AND COMPLAINTS.
I THINK I WAS BORN INTO THE ROYAL FAMILY BY SOME KIND OF COSMIC MISTAKE.
IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH PRIDE. I'M NOT CUT OUT FOR THE JOB LIKE MY BROTHER
PEOPLE LOOK DOWN ON YOU BECAUSE YOU DON'T TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR ROYAL BLOOD.
I NEVER THOUGHT THE PRINCESS' "COMPANION" WOULD BE DINING WITH US, YOUR MAJESTY.
HA HA!
I HOPE I'M A TRAVELING ENTERTAINER IN MY NEXT LIFE!
Ladies and Gents! Come see the show!
LADY DERMOBEDE, IT'S BECAUSE LADY PRIMULA *WILL* INHERIT THE THRONE.
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF IT. BESIDES, IF SHE'S TO INHERIT THE THRONE, SHE NEEDS TO BE SURROUNDED WITH THE *APPROPRIATE* CLASS OF PEOPLE.
HE'S FROM THE POKITA FAMILY FROM JAMU, A COUNTRY IN THE EAST!
I HOPE HE'S FROM A PROPER FAMILY? WHERE *IS* HE FROM?
HE'S PRIMULA'S BEST FRIEND.

SHE'LL BE RULING OVER EVERYONE, NOT JUST ROYALTY.
ARGENT IS A VERY SMART YOUNG MAN. HE'S QUITE THE HERBALIST.
IN FACT, HE FORMULATED A NEW SOAP FROM PLANTS THAT CLEANS VERY WELL.
I BELIEVE SHE SHOULD ASSOCIATE WITH A WIDE RANGE OF PEOPLE TO HELP BROADEN HER PERSPECTIVES.
I CAN'T BELIEVE AN ATTENDANT FROM PEASANT STOCK WOULD DARE COMMENT AT MY TABLE!
CRACK
OH, EXCUSE ME.
THAT'S FINE. YOU SHOULD USE THAT CLEANSER THAT YOU SPOKE OF.
TRILDAN, APOLOGIZE TO CLARIS RIGHT NOW.
YOUR MAJESTY, IT WAS MY CARELESSNESS.
THAT'S RIGHT. MY SON SHOULDN'T HAVE TO APOLOGIZE TO A PEASANT!

SLAM!!
CLARIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT INDIVIDUAL HERE!
I WILL NOT ALLOW CLARIS TO BE MIS-TREATED!
I'M...
I'M SORRY.
I LOVE MY UNCLE BECAUSE HE'S SO SWEET!
TRILDAN AND MY AUNT ARE SO STUCK UP. I HATE THEM!
THAT MADE ME FEEL GOOD!
DID YOU HEAR? MY FATHER SAID YOU'RE MY COMPANION, NOT A FOOD TASTER!
MY POSITION IS SUPPOSED TO REMAIN SECRET. THAT'S JUST A COVER STORY.
BECAUSE HE'S CREEPY!
WHY DO WE HAVE TO HIDE?
THAT'S TRILDAN! HIDE!
DIVE
HE TRIED TO KISS ME LAST TIME!
WHAT? REALLY?!
I'D RATHER DIE THAN KISS TRILDAN.

I WOULDN'T MIND KISSING YOU.
YOU CAN'T ...!
IN FAIRY TALES, PRINCES AND PRINCESSES KISS. THE PRINCESS IS AWAKENED BY A PRINCE'S KISS!
I'M NOT A PRINCE. BESIDES, YOU'LL GET HURT. MY BODY IS POISONOUS...
REVERSE SEXUAL HARASSMENT
RUSH!!
TRILDAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING WATCHING US!!
SOME-BODY'S OVER THERE...
PRIN-CESS ...
I'M SORRY, I'M NOT SPYING ON YOU!!
I'M JUST LOST AGAIN, THAT'S ALL!
I keep getting lost. I'm going to get in trouble again.
DO YOU HAVE BAD EYES, MAYBE?
HOW MANY FIN-GERS?
3...
...

THE PRINCESS ADORES HAVING ARGENT AROUND.
ARGENT SEEMS TO BE DETERMINED TO SUCCEED IN HIS ROLE AS A FOOD TASTER.
I'M GLAD HE'S LOYAL TO HIS ROLE.
HE NEEDS TO BE A FOOD TASTER FOR A WHILE. AFTER ALL, THE RINGLEADER OF THE TRAITORS PLOTTING TO KILL MY DAUGHTER IS STILL ALIVE.
I NEVER EXPECTED TO FIND LADY DERMOBEDA'S NAME MENTIONED AFTER WE INTERROGATED THE TRAITORS THAT WERE CAPTURED.
I HAD AN INKLING...
AS YOU CAN SEE, TIGASON STILL HAS NO INTEREST IN THE THRONE.
DERMOBEDA'S DIFFERENT. I DON'T THINK SHE WANTS TO SEE HER HUSBAND AS KING, BUT RATHER, HER SPOILED SON.
LOOKS LIKE THE TRAITORS COULD SEE THAT AND THOUGHT TO USE HER TO THEIR BENEFIT.
SHE'S NOT SOMEONE WE CAN ACCUSE EASILY. SHE'S THE DAUGHTER OF A POWERFUL FAMILY. WE SHOULD WATCH VERY CAREFULLY FOR NOW.

YOUR MAJ-ESTY...
THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND WORDS OF SUPPORT EARLIER...
THAT WAS THE LEAST I COULD DO FOR YOUR HARD WORK.
THAT LOOKS WON-DERFUL.
YOUR MAJ-ESTY?
THIS IS FOR YOUR RUINED DRESS EARLIER.
THANK YOU FOR CARING FOR MY DAUGH-TER.
I WOULD LIKE TO SEE HER GROW UP AS STRONG AND EARNEST AS YOU.
THANK YOU, YOUR MAJESTY.
I SEE... SO THAT BOY'S THE FOOD TASTER.

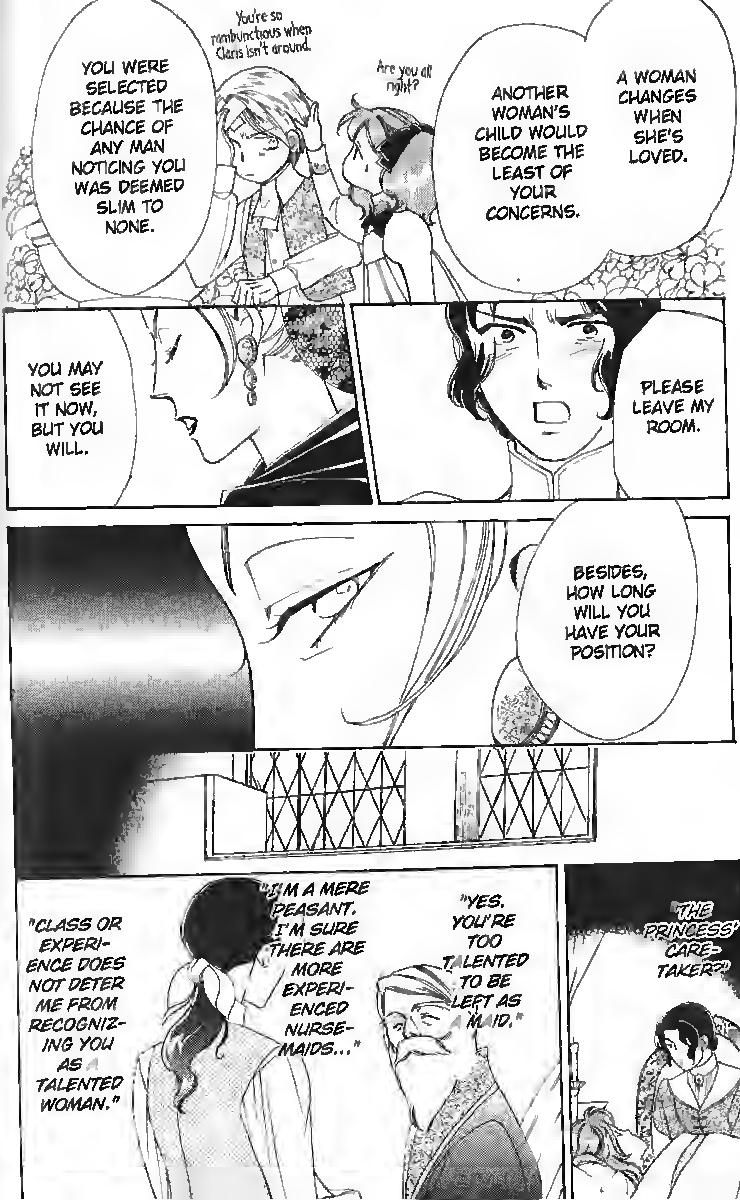
SHE'S WELL PROTECTED. WE HAVE TO CONSIDER A DIFFERENT TACTIC.
WE NEED TO FIND INSIDE HELP
TELL ME MORE ABOUT THAT WOMAN, ZIRCON.
YES, LADY DER-MOBEDA.
CARLI DOESN'T WANT TO WEAR GLASSES BECAUSE HE THINKS THEY'RE UGLY. HE'S FUNNY!
THAT IS FUNNY!
I WAS LONELY WITHOUT SIBLINGS OR MY MOTHER, BUT...
...NOW THAT I HAVE YOU AND ARGENT, I'M NOT SAD ANYMORE!
YOU MAKE ME VERY HAPPY, TOO, MY PRINCESS.

CLARIS, READ ME ANOTHER BOOK!
YES, MY LADY.
I WISH MY LIFE WOULD STAY THIS WAY
I WANT A HAPPY ENDING LIKE I READ IN THE FAIRY TALES...
Long ago, there was a princess...
I'M FAMISHED!
I NEVER THOUGHT COOKING WAS SO MUCH WORK! WELL, I ACTUALLY ONLY HELPED WITH PREPARATION. SOMEONE ELSE DID THE ACTUAL COOKING.
But...
IT ONLY TAKES A MOMENT TO EAT!
I'M GOING TO BE YOUR FOOD TASTER FOR A WHILE.
WAIT, MY LADY!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
YOU SHOULD BE WARY.
NOT EVERYONE THINKS FAVORABLY OF YOU. THIS PLACE IS DIFFERENT FROM VILLAGES SURROUNDING THE CASTLE.
YOU SHOULDN'T TRUST THE VILLAGERS HERE TOO MUCH.

I CAN'T BE A PRINCESS UNLESS I TRUST MY PEOPLE!
I KEEP HAVING TO TELL YOU! YOU'RE NOT MY FOOD TASTER ANYMORE.
BESIDES, I TOLD YOU THAT I HAVE TO SWALLOW BITTER REALITY FOR MYSELF.
PEOPLE CHANGE THEIR MINDS, NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU TRUST THEM.
NOT EVERYONE IS STRONG ENOUGH TO BE ABLE TO SWALLOW EVERYTHING LIFE OFFERS.
IF YOU'RE BETRAYED, YOU'RE THE ONE THAT GETS HURT.
ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT HER?
IN THAT CASE, I WOULD HAVE TO BE WARY OF YOU, TOO.
YES, THAT'S THE REALITY.
BAM
FINE! I WON'T EAT WHILE I'M HERE!

WHERE'S CLARIS?
I HAVEN'T SEEN HER ALL MORNING.
LADY DERMOBEDA WANTED TO MEET WITH HER TO ISSUE A FORMAL APOLOGY.
A MARRIAGE PRO-POSAL? FOR ME?

I DON'T NEED YOUR SYMPATHY, I TAKE PRIDE IN MY POSITION...
PRIDE? YOU MEAN YOUR LOVE FOR THE KING.
YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM ME I CAN TELL.
IT'S TO MAKE UP FOR THE OTHER DAY. BESIDES, YOU'RE GETTING OLDER I DON'T WANT YOU TO LIVE OUT YOUR DAYS AS A BABYSITTER.
I HEAR YOU HAVE NEITHER FAMILY NOR ANY PROSPECTS OF MARRIAGE.
GENERALLY AN EXPERIENCED NURSEMAID WOULD HAVE BEEN HIRED, BUT YOU- A SINGLE WOMAN- WAS CHOSEN, NOT FOR YOUR TALENT OR YOUR EXPERIENCE...
...BUT BECAUSE YOU'RE A PLAIN, UNATTRACTIVE WOMAN.
I DON'T CARE! I...
FLUTTER
THE KING IS SO GOOD AT TAKING ADVANTAGE OF OTHERS TO SUIT HIS AGENDA.
NO MATTER WHAT YOU THINK OF THE KING, YOU WILL NEVER BE ANYTHING BUT A CARETAKER FOR HIS BRAT.
THE KING ONLY HAS ROOM FOR HIS DAUGHTER AND THE LATE QUEEN IN HIS HEART.
Ultra Spiral Spike!
BOING


YOU WERE SELECTED BECAUSE THE CHANCE OF ANY MAN NOTICING YOU WAS DEEMED SLIM TO NONE.
You're so rambunctious when Claris isn't around.
Are you all right?
ANOTHER WOMAN'S CHILD WOULD BECOME THE LEAST OF YOUR CONCERNS.
A WOMAN CHANGES WHEN SHE'S LOVED.
YOU MAY NOT SEE IT NOW, BUT YOU WILL.
PLEASE LEAVE MY ROOM.
BESIDES, HOW LONG WILL YOU HAVE YOUR POSITION?
"CLASS OR EXPERIENCE DOES NOT DETER ME FROM RECOGNIZING YOU AS A TALENTED WOMAN."
"I'M A MERE PEASANT. I'M SURE THERE ARE MORE EXPERIENCED NURSEMAIDS..."
"YES. YOU'RE TOO TALENTED TO BE LEFT AS MAID."
THE PRINCESS' CARETAKER?!

"THANK YOU FOR CARING FOR MY DAUGHTER."
"I WOULD LIKE TO SEE HER GROW UP AS STRONG AND EARNEST AS YOU."
NOBODY HAD NOTICED ME BEFORE. THE KING WAS THE FIRST ONE...
"IF YOU WOULD FOCUS THE SAME CARE ON MY DAUGHTER NOW..."
"YOU TOOK METICULOUS CARE OF THE LATE QUEEN'S PRIMROSE GARDEN."
ARGENT, READ ME A BOOK!
CLARIS IS BEING ALOOF LATELY.
UH, I'M NOT GOOD WITH STUFF LIKE THAT...
WHAT ABOUT A BOOK ABOUT FLOWERS? TEACH ME MORE!
LET'S SEE WHAT I CAN FIND FOR TODAY...
FLAP FLAP
THIS PRETTY BLUE FLOWER!
THAT'S WOLFBANE.
IT'S PRETTY BUT VERY POISONOUS.

WOLFBANE? A FLOWER YOU *DON'T* LIKE? HAVE YOU EATEN IT?
YES. THEY USED TO MIX IT INTO SWEETS AND MAKE ME EAT IT.
WOLFBANE IS ONE OF THE MOST TOXIC FLOWERS. WHEN INGESTED, YOUR SKIN AND LIPS TURN NUMB WHILE YOUR BODY IS WRACKED IN PAIN.
IT'S FOLLOWED BY VOMITING, SEIZURES, BREATHING DIFFICULTIES, AND LOW BLOOD PRESSURE. IT KILLS MOST PEOPLE.
I DON'T LIKE THAT FLOWER TO THIS DAY.
IT'S SO HARD AND PAINFUL THAT YOU THINK YOUR MIND AND HEART IS TURNING INTO POISON.
YOUR BODY STOPS RESPONDING
IT'S SO PRETTY, BUT SO TOXIC.
PLANTS THAT ARE TOXIC ARE THAT WAY FOR SELF-DEFENSE. IT'S TO MAKE SURE THEY DON'T GET EATEN OR HURT.
THAT SAID, WOLFBANE CAN BE USED AS MEDICINE. IT CAN BE USED AS A TONIC AND ALSO USED TO HELP DIMINISH PAIN...

I SEE. THAT'S JUST LIKE...
LIKE WHAT?
NEVER MIND.
LOOK, CARL! MUST BE LOST AGAIN.
CARL!!
CARL!!
LADY PRIMULA! DON'T LEAN OVER TOO FAR!
SLIP
YAAAAHHHH
SLAMM
CLARIS! HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN UNDER YOUR WATCH?!

I...
IT WAS MY CARELESSNESS. I HAD BEEN THINKING...
CLARIS WAS TIRED. IT'S BECAUSE I WORRY HER TOO MUCH. DON'T BE MAD AT HER!
IT'S MY FAULT!
THINKING? YOU'RE THE PRINCESS' PRIMARY CARETAKER. THE PRINCESS SHOULD BE THE ONLY THING ON YOUR MIND!
YOU'RE DISMISSED FOR THE DAY. I'LL FIND SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER THE PRINCESS TONIGHT.
CLARIS...
"THE KING ONLY HAS ROOM FOR HIS DAUGHTER AND THE LATE QUEEN IN HIS HEART."
"NO MATTER WHAT YOU THINK OF THE KING, YOU WILL NEVER BE ANYTHING BUT A CARETAKER FOR HIS BRAT."
CLICK
I'M OKAY! I DON'T HURT ANYMORE!
PAT PAT
I'M SORRY, PRIMULA. THAT MUST HAVE HURT...

SQUEEZE
COME ON IN!
ARGENT? IS THAT YOU?
CLATTER
HOW DID YOU KNOW?
I COULD SMELL YOUR SWEET FRAGRANCE. OTHER PEOPLE MAY NOT NOTICE IT, BUT I DO.
HOW'S YOUR LEG?
IT HURTS. I CAN'T SLEEP.
I THOUGHT SO. I SLIPPED OUT OF THE CASTLE TO PICK SOME HERBS.
HOW DID YOU LEAVE THE PALACE? YOU DID THAT LAST TIME, TOO!
JOLT

SHE WON'T WAKE UP 'TIL THE MORNING.
A-HA! THAT'S HOW YOU DO IT!
HERE'S SOME WILLOW BARK. IT'S GOOD FOR PAIN.
IT'S REALLY BITTER! ARE YOU SURE IT'S NOT BAD FOR ME?
...
IT COULD CAUSE AN UPSET STOMACH IN HIGH DOSES...
Really it's not poison...
YOU SAID POISON COULD BE MEDICINE DEPENDING ON THE DOSE!
MUNCH
THAT TASTED AWFUL!
MY LADY, YOU LOOK WEIRD.
ARGENT, YOU'RE LIKE THE WOLF-BANE.
WHY?
YOU'RE PRETTY, BUT YOU'RE POISON-OUS.
YOU CAN ALSO HELP PEOPLE.

...MAYBE IT WON'T HAVE TO BE TOXIC TO DEFEND ITSELF ANYMORE.
I'LL HIDE IT IN A SECRET PLACE WHERE NOBODY WILL HARM IT.
IT'S PROBABLY A VERY NICE FLOWER! I MIGHT PLANT SOME IN THE GARDEN, THEN...
YOU MIGHT NOT LIKE THE WOLFBANE, BUT I THINK IT'S A LOVELY FLOWER.
IT WILL BE MY SECRET TREASURE!
MY LADY, LET ME READ YOU A BOOK!

YOU'RE ALREADY ASLEEP?
The tree bark must be working.
THE PRINCE AND THE PRINCESS...
SHE'S ADORABLE.
"THE PRINCESS IS AWAKENED BY A PRINCE'S KISS!"
"HE'S ALSO BEEN AFFLICTED WITH THE 'GRIM REAPER'S CURSE.' IF YOU TOUCH HIM, YOU'LL GET HURT."
"NO, PRINCESS! YOU MUST NEVER TOUCH HIM!"

RIGHT, I'M BASILISK, THE POISONER.
I KILL EVERYTHING I TOUCH.
YOU'RE THE FIRST FLOWER TO BLOOM IN MY HEART. I WISH I COULD TOUCH YOU...

CREAK
CLARIS, WERE YOU AWAKE ALL NIGHT?
I AM VERY SORRY FOR MY HARSH WORDS LAST NIGHT. I'M SURE YOU ARE TIRED.
YOUR MAJESTY, I APOLOGIZE FOR FAILING YOU.
I PROMISE NEVER TO FAIL YOU AGAIN! PLEASE FORGIVE ME.
NO...
I'M NOT THE ONE YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT. IT'S THE PRINCESS, AS YOU ARE HER ATTENDANT.
PRINCESS' ATTENDANT...
YOUR MAJESTY, DO YOU DISLIKE ME?
CLARIS?
YOU SAID I WAS *IMPORTANT!*
YOU'VE TREATED ME KINDLY MANY TIMES!

HOWEVER, I NEED YOU AS A MOTHER FIGURE TO MY DAUGHTER, NOT AS A LOVER.
WERE YOU LYING?
"GENERALLY AN EXPERIENCED NURSEMAID WOULD HAVE BEEN HIRED, BUT YOU- A SINGLE WOMAN- WERE CHOSEN, NOT FOR YOUR TALENT OR YOUR EXPERIENCE, BUT BECAUSE YOU'RE A PLAIN, UNATTRACTIVE WOMAN."
NO, YOU'RE VERY IMPORTANT TO ME.
WILL YOU NOT TOUCH ME?
WILL YOU NOT LIE WITH ME, EVEN AS AN ACT OF PITY?
I CANNOT, AND THAT IS MY REALITY. PLEASE UNDER-STAND.
I THINK YOU NEED SOME REST.
I DON'T THINK YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN REST SINCE YOU STARTED WORKING HERE.

I THINK YOU WILL FIND RENEWED ENTHUSIASM AFTER A BREAK TO REST YOUR MIND AND BODY.
RARELY DOES ANYONE ENTER IT ANYMORE...
THIS ROOM...
THE KING STILL LOVES HER.
THIS MUST HAVE BELONGED TO THE LATE QUEEN.
NOTHING HAS BEEN CHANGED.
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN...
SNAKK

KTZ
KTZ
KTZ
I WONDER HOW CLARIS IS DOING?
SHE WENT AWAY SO QUICKLY! I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED?
YOU'RE RIGHT...
ARE YOU LOST AGAIN?
THIS WAS ALL MY FAULT.
IF I HAD NOT GOTTEN LOST AGAIN, THE PRINCESS ...
IT'S PROBABLY JUST A BAD COINCIDENCE.
I'M SURE THE BALCONY WAS OLD AND IN NEED TO REPAIR.
Oh!
LOOK!
?
Oh...

IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S BEEN TAMPERED WITH.
SHATTER
WHY DID I DEDICATE YEARS OF MY LIFE?!
I GAVE EVERYTHING I HAD TO HIS MAJESTY!
I TOLD YOU SO.
HE'S JUST USING YOU.
LADY DER-MOBEDA ...
GOOD EVENING CLARIS. I FEEL FOR YOU. AFTER ALL WE'RE BOTH WOMEN I WANTED TO COME AND VISIT...
BLACK

WHAT DID YOU SAY?
YOU WERE THE ONES TRYING TO KILL HER...?
I DID IT FOR MY COUNTRY. AFTER ALL, MY SON TRILDAN WOULD MAKE A FAR BETTER KING.
DON'T YOU WANT REVENGE?
KILL THE ONE THING HE LOVES THE MOST?
HE WAS AWARE OF YOUR LOVE AND CHOSE TO STEP ALL OVER YOUR HEART.
BESIDES, IF THE PRINCESS DIED, I'M SURE THE KING WOULD PAY MORE ATTENTION TO YOU.
SLAM
CLARIS, DON'T LET HER FOOL YOU!
YOU CAN GIVE THIS TO THE PRINCESS, NO?
THIS IS WOLFBANE TOXIN. PEOPLE CALL IT THE "STEPMOTHER'S POISON." THIS CAN RID YOUR LIFE OF AN OBSTACLE QUICKLY.

SILENCE!
I WANTED TO TELL YOU--
THE BALCONY COLLAPSING WASN'T AN ACCIDENT! THAT WOMAN'S RESPONSIBLE FOR IT, I'M SURE!
YOU'RE THE FOOD TASTER! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I'M GOING TO...
THE KING DENIED ME, THAT WILL NEVER CHANGE.
THAT'S NO LONGER MY CONCERN.
I JUST WANT HIM TO PAY ATTENTION TO ME... JUST ONCE.
I DON'T CARE IF I'M HATED.
LADY DERMOBEDE, I'LL DO IT.
"A WOMAN CHANGES WHEN SHE'S LOVED."
CLARIS! WHY?
FINE, WE JUST NEED TO KILL THAT FOOD TASTER AND KILL THAT GIRL!
I WON'T LET YOU DO IT!
DON'T YOU SEE, ARGENT?

YOU AND I...WE'RE IN THE SAME POSITION.
WE CAN DO OUR BEST FOR THE PRINCESS, BUT IT WON'T BE REWARDED. WE'LL BE TOSSED ASIDE ONCE WE'RE NOT USEFUL ANYMORE.
IN YOUR CASE, YOU'LL BE EXECUTED.
!
IF THE REBELLION'S STIFLED, THERE WON'T BE A NEED FOR A FOOD TASTER.
YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN WHAT YOU ARE, RIGHT?
IN THAT CASE... WHY DON'T YOU HELP US?
I'LL SET YOU FREE IF YOU PROMISE TO HELP.
YOU CAN STAY LOYAL TO THE PRINCESS AND DIE, OR HELP US AND LIVE!

SHE'S SOMEONE THAT WILL NEVER BE YOURS.
DOESN'T THAT MAKE YOU WANT TO DESTROY HER?
THIS IS THE PLAN.
IN THREE DAYS, CLARIS WILL VISIT WITH PRINCESS' FAVORITE TREAT.
I'M SO HAPPY TO SEE YOU!
HAVE YOU BEEN A GOOD GIRL, MY LADY?
I'VE BAKED YOUR FAVORITE TREAT. CHERRY PIE!
HERE YOU GO.
WAIT, ARGENT HAS TO SAMPLE FIRST, AS USUAL.
YOU'RE GOING TO TASTE THE FOOD AS USUAL TO BYPASS SUSPICION.
THE RIGHT SIDE IS POISONED. YOU'RE GOING TO TAKE A PIECE FROM THE LEFT SIDE.

"YOU AND I... WE'RE IN THE SAME POSITION."
"WE'LL BE TOSSED ASIDE ONCE WE'RE NOT USEFUL ANYMORE."
HERE YOU GO.
I'LL BE EXECUTED WHEN I'M NO LONGER USEFUL.
I'M THE PRINCESS' FOOD TASTER AND A BASILISK.
CLARIS IS RIGHT.
I WONDER WHAT IT IS?
CLARIS, I HAVE A SURPRISE PRESENT FOR YOU LATER!
"I DON'T CARE IF I DIE. WHO WILL STOP DERMOBEDE... OR CLARIS?"
YET, I CAN'T KILL THE PRINCESS
WHAT CAN I DO?
"IT'S PROBABLY A VERY NICE FLOWER!"
"YOU MIGHT NOT LIKE THE WOLF-BANE, BUT I THINK IT'S A LOVELY FLOWER."
"YOU'RE PRETTY, BUT YOU'RE POISONOUS."
"ARGENT, YOU'RE LIKE THE WOLF-BANE."

ARGENT, YOU...
CHOMP CHOMP
I THOUGHT YOU DIDN'T LIKE SWEETS.
I'M SORRY, LADY PRIMULA. THIS WAS JUST TOO GOOD.
I COULDN'T HELP EATING HALF OF IT.
ARGENT?
I THINK I ATE TOO MUCH, TOO QUICKLY. I HAVE A PIECE STUCK IN MY THROAT.
I'M SORRY. CAN YOU BRING ME MORE WATER?
SURE!
SHATTER

KILL ME NOW. BLAME ME FOR THE POISONING ATTEMPT.
LET ME TAKE AWAY ALL THE POISON IN YOUR HEART!
ARGENT, WHAT DID YOU DO THAT FOR?!
BOTH THE KING AND THE PRINCESS TRUST YOU COMPLETELY.
C... CLARIS!
CRASH

HE WAS PREPARING TO GIVE YOU THE QUARTERS OF THE LATE QUEEN.
THAT WAS HIS ANSWER... TO...YOU.
"MY POSITION FORBIDS ME FROM LOVING YOU, BUT I OFFER MY COMPLETE TRUST..."
WHAT HAVE I DONE?!
ARGENT, HERE'S WATER!
ARGENT, WHAT'S WRONG?!
CRACKK
FORGIVE ME, PRINCESS. I POISONED YOUR PIE.
I WAS ORDERED BY LADY DERMOBEDE TO KILL YOU.

CLARIS!
I AM SO SORRY, MY LADY.
I HAVE FAILED AS A WOMAN AND A MOTHER.

PRINCE TIGASON, LADY DERMOBEDE AND PRINCE TRILDAN WERE ALL EXECUTED FOR TREACHERY.
POOR PRINCE TRILDAN. HE'S ONLY A CHILD.
WELL, THERE WAS NO WAY AROUND IT.
YOU CAN'T LET HIM LIVE. HE'LL GROW UP TO AVENGE HIS PARENTS AND IT'LL BE THE SAME THING ALL OVER!
CLARIS ...
UNCLE TIGASON ...
PEOPLE ARE DYING BECAUSE OF ME...
ARGENT
WHERE'S ARGENT?
I HEAR HE INGESTED QUITE A DOSE, EVEN FOR A BASILISK...
I DON'T KNOW IF HE CAN OVER-COME THE WOLFBANE TOXIN.
HIS BODY MAY SURVIVE, BUT WHAT ABOUT HIS MIND? I THINK IT'LL BE BEST TO GET RID OF HIM.
GET RID OF HIM?
IN THE END, I THINK THAT WILL BE THE BEST FOR ARGENT.
WE'LL EXECUTE HIM TOMORROW MORNING.
ARGENT!

LADY PRIMULA ?
I'M GLAD YOU SURVIVED, ARGENT.
I HAD A DREAM ... ABOUT YOUR LAST DAY AS A FOOD TASTER.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SAVED ME.
YOU RISKED YOUR OWN LIFE TO DO IT.
IT STILL MAKES ME SO SAD, EVEN AS A DREAM.
HOW CAN I BE STRONG, JUST LIKE YOU? STRONG AGAINST POISON AND REALITY?

I'M NOT STRONG. I JUST HAVE MORE TOLERANCE.
YOU NEED TO EAT FOR YOUR HEALTH.
CLATTER
JUST LIKE YOU SAID, I'M NO LONGER YOUR FOOD TASTER.
YOU CAN DO AS YOU PLEASE.
I'VE DONE MY JOB AS AN APOTHECARY.
WILL YOU STAY BY MY SIDE UNTIL DAWN...
...LIKE YOU USED TO?
I CAN'T DO THAT.
WE'RE NO LONGER CHILDREN, AND YOU'RE THE FUTURE HEIR TO THE THRONE.
SLAM

"GOOD LUCK!"
"THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET CLOSER TO THE PRINCESS!"
WHAT IS HE TALKING ABOUT? I CAN'T EVEN TOUCH HER.
WE'RE SO CLOSE, BUT...
...THIS IS REALITY.
WE'LL BOTH DESTROY EACH OTHER IF WE IGNORE THE DISTANCE BETWEEN US.
Back at the Castle of Beazol
YOU WERE CORRECT, YOUR MAJESTY. ZIRCON HAD BEEN TAMPERING ...
...WITH THE SUPPLIES BOTH TO THE FORMER BATTLEFIELDS AND DURING THE HARVEST FESTIVAL
SO, WHERE IS HE?
HE'S DISAPPEARED FROM THE CASTLE.
THIS IS A LIST OF MEN THAT HAVE DISAPPEARED WITH HIM. WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO TRACK THEM DOWN YET.

GATHER MY SOLDIERS! I'M LEAVING FOR THE BORDER RIGHT AWAY.
THAT LITTLE BRAT DECIDED TO INSPECT THE FORMER BATTLEFIELDS? SHE'S GETTING IN OUR WAY.
IT'S ALSO A PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO GET RID OF THE PRINCESS.
SECURITY'S LAX AROUND HERE, UNLIKE THE PALACE AND ITS VICINITY. I THINK THIS WAS WORTH WAITING FOR.
ZIRCON, LOOK INTO THE GEOGRAPHY OF THIS AREA AND FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THESE VILLAGERS.
THIS IS MY CHANCE TO AVENGE MY PARENTS' DEATH.
AS YOU WISH, PRINCE TRILDAN.

DERMOBEDA WAS A FINE MOTHER. HOWEVER, SHE WAS HAUGHTY AND AMBITIOUS. I COULDN'T SAY THAT SHE HAD A GOOD HEART.
ON THE OTHER HAND, MY FATHER, TIGASON, WAS NOTHING BUT KIND.
MY MOTHER USED TO BERATE HIM FOR HIS GOOD NATURE. SHE SAID HIS PERSONALITY CAUSED HIM TO LOSE THE THRONE.
I'LL PAY YOU BACK FOR YOUR KINDNESS, PRINCE.
THE KING OF BEAZOL DID NOT HAVE AN HEIR FOR A LONG TIME. AS A RESULT, MY FATHER WAS THE SUCCESSOR TO THE THRONE.
HOWEVER, THE QUEEN GOT PREGNANT SUDDENLY. AS SOON AS THE PRINCESS WAS BORN, HE MADE HER THE HEIR INSTEAD.
YOU'RE VERY KIND, FATHER. I THINK YOU'D MAKE A FINE KING, DESPITE WHAT MOTHER SAYS!
DON'T TELL ANYONE. I'M IN CHARGE OF THE TREASURY. I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO DO WHAT I DID.
TRILDAN, YOU SAW THAT?

TRILDAN, IT TAKES MORE THAN KINDNESS TO BE A GOOD KING.
IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT BLOOD, POWER, WEALTH, INTELLIGENCE OR KINDNESS. THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE.
IT'S A CERTAIN QUALITY THAT PEOPLE ARE MAGNETIZED TO.
I KNOW I DON'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES, SO I HAD NO QUALMS ABOUT GIVING UP THE CROWN.
I DON'T KNOW IF THE PRINCESS HAS THE QUALITIES YOU SPEAK OF EITHER ...
... ALTHOUGH SHE'S VERY CUTE.
THE PEOPLE WILL DECIDE IN THE FUTURE.
WHY DO YOU WANT TO BE KING?
I'M NOT SURE.
RIGHT... YOU'VE TAKEN AFTER ME!
WE MAY HAVE HAD A VERY HAPPY FAMILY IF WE WERE NOT ROYALTY.

BOTH MY PARENTS WERE EXECUTED FOR TREACHERY ...
...BY THE CURRENT KING OF BEAZOL.
THE RUTHLESS KING AND MY KIND FATHER... WHY WERE THEIR FATES SO DIFFERENT?
I STILL DON'T UNDER-STAND THIS "QUALITY" OF A KING THAT MY FATHER SPOKE OF.
I'LL BECOME THE KING AND FIND OUT FOR MYSELF!

Inside at the Castle of Beazol
CLOMP
CLOMP
WHAT?! I MUST GO!!
TRAITORS PLOTTING TO KILL THE PRINCESS ARE ON THE MOVE.
WE'RE GOING TO SEND SOLDIERS TO THE BORDER TO PROTECT LADY PRIMULA.
SIR CARBEAU, WHAT'S WRONG?
ME TOO!
DAMN IT! HE THINKS WE'RE USELESS!
PLEASE MAINTAIN ORDER HERE!
I UNDERSTAND YOUR DESIRE TO HELP.
CARL, I NEED YOU TO DIRECT THE AFFAIRS OF THE CASTLE. SODA, YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SHOP.
YOUR MAJESTY...

CLOMP
CLOMP
CLOMP
CLOMP
CLOMP
POOF
UH, WHAT?
WHOEVER IS BEHIND THIS COMMANDED CONSUL ZIRCON ALONG WITH OTHER IMPORTANT OFFICERS.
HE MUST BE SOMEONE IMPORTANT. I WONDER WHO...
COULD IT BE...?
Former battlefield between Navara and Beazol
LADY PRIMULA ISN'T FEELING WELL TODAY.
SHE SAYS SHE DOESN'T NEED TO SEE A HEALER.
I SEE.

"I HAD A DREAM... ABOUT YOUR LAST DAY AS A FOOD TASTER."
"HOW CAN I BE STRONG, JUST LIKE YOU? STRONG AGAINST POISON AND REALITY?"
"IT STILL MAKES ME SO SAD, EVEN AS A DREAM."
"I'M NOT STRONG. I JUST HAVE MORE TOLERANCE."
HAVE MORE TOLERANCE? HOW LONG DID THAT TAKE?
"WILL YOU STAY BY MY SIDE UNTIL DAWN, LIKE YOU USED TO?"
"I CAN'T DO THAT. WE'RE NO LONGER CHIL-DREN...
...AND YOU'RE THE FUTURE HEIR TO THE THRONE."
HOW COULD YOU BE SO COLD?
SHE COULDN'T EVEN LEARN TO CHOP ANYTHING RIGHT BEFORE SHE QUIT! I SUPPOSE IT'S CHILD'S PLAY FOR HER HIGHNESS!
MOM, DON'T BE MEAN!
COME ON, JILL! GET THE FIRE GOING.
THAT'S NOT TRUE...
I'M PARA-LYZED BY FEAR.

I'M TOO WEAK TO RULE OVER THIS COUNTRY...
I FINALLY REALIZED...
...I'M NOT AS STRONG AS PEOPLE THINK I AM...
PRINCE TRILDAN, THE KING HAS DISPATCHED SOLDIERS TO THIS AREA.
SO HE FIGURED OUT OUR PLAN, EH?
KING BEAZOL HASN'T BECOME DULL IN HIS OLD AGE
BLOCK ALL PATHWAYS TO THIS AREA RIGHT AWAY.
YES, MY PRINCE!
I'M GLAD TO SEE THIS DAY COME TO FRUITION, PRINCE TRILDAN.
?

EXCUSE ME. YOUR FATHER HELPED ME BEFORE HE WAS KILLED.
HE HAD EXCUSED ME FROM REIMBURSING FOR THE LOSS OF A PARTICULAR TRANSACTION. I WAS EVENTUALLY FIRED, BUT...
YOUR FATHER GAVE ME EXTRA TIME TO PAY THE TAXES FOR MY ESTATE. HE WAS A GOOD MAN.
THE CURRENT KING IS COLD-BLOODED AND BRUTAL!
WE HAVE HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR YOU.
I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU'RE ALIVE.
THANK MY MOTHER FOR THAT.
WHAT? THREE OF US? EXECUTION?
AT LEAST SPARE TRILDAN!
IMPOSSIBLE. IT WOULDN'T BE A DETERRENT IF THE CHILDREN OF TRAITORS WERE LEFT UNPUNISHED.
WHAT A HEARTLESS BASTARD!
YOU'VE BEEN ACCUSED OF AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON LADY PRIMULA. CLARIS CONFESSED ALL BEFORE KILLING HERSELF.

THE KING'S JOB IS TO UTILIZE HIS PEOPLE IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE ORDER OF HIS COUNTRY.
DEATH IS AN APPROPRIATE PUNISHMENT FOR THOSE THAT WOULD DISTURB THAT ORDER.
DER-MOBEDA!
HE WAS THE ONE THAT DROVE CLARIS TO HER ACTIONS!
HE WOULD USE PEOPLE AND DISPOSE OF THEM!
HAVE MORE PRIDE FOR YOUR ROYAL BLOOD!
TELL THE KING MY LAST WORDS. TELL HIM I APOLOGIZE FOR THE DISRUPTION--
FATHER!
THUD
HAVE YOU GONE MAD?!
UNH!

I MUST REMAIN HERE TO TAKE CARE OF THIS MESS.
WHAT ABOUT YOU, MOTHER?
YOU CAN TRUST CONSUL ZIRCON TO CARE FOR YOU. PROMISE ME TO TAKE REVENGE ONE DAY!
TRILDAN, RUN!!
PRIOR TO THE EXECUTION, TIGASON'S ESTATE WENT UP IN FLAMES, INCLUDING THEIR SERVANTS.
THEIR BODIES WERE IDENTIFIED THROUGH WHATEVER REMAINED OF THEIR CLOTHES AND JEWELRY.
IF THOSE BODIES BELONGED TO OTHER PEOPLE...
TO PREVENT A BIGGER SCANDAL, THE OFFICIAL STATEMENT WAS THAT THE FAMILY WAS EXECUTED.
YOUR MAJESTY, WE HAVE A PROBLEM!
THE BRIDGE IS GONE!
THEY BLOCKED THE SHORTEST ROUTE FIRST.
SHOULD WE TAKE ANOTHER PATH?

I'M SURE WE'LL FIND SIMILAR SITUATIONS THERE.
WE'RE GOING TO TAKE THE LONGER ROUTE THROUGH THE FOREST. TAKE ONLY WHAT YOU'LL NEED!
I HOPE SHE'LL REMAIN SAFE UNTIL WE ARRIVE...
EVERYONE PUTS ME AT AN ARM'S LENGTH BECAUSE THEY EXPECT MUCH OF ME AS THE FUTURE HEIR TO THE THRONE.
EVEN MY FATHER CAN BE VERY ALOOF.
"I AM IN DANGER BECAUSE I AM WEAK IN BODY AND MIND."
FROM THIS DAY FORTH, I WILL BECOME STRONG! I WILL BECOME STRONGER THAN EVERYONE ELSE!!
I TRIED TO LIVE UP TO MY WORDS, BUT I'VE ONLY SUCCEEDED IN SELF-DECEPTION.
HOWEVER, I HAD ALWAYS KNOWN THAT THE POSITION COMES WITH SUCH BURDENS...
DO I HAVE THE QUALITIES TO MAKE A GOOD RULER?

THE PRINCESS HASN'T SHOWN HERSELF TODAY, EITHER.
KNOCK
KNOCK
DURING TIMES LIKE THIS, I NEED SOMEONE BESIDE ME...
DEPRESSION? SHE IS A WOMAN AFTER ALL.
THEY SAID SHE'S BEEN DEPRESSED LATELY AND HAS TAKEN TO HER BED.
WE'VE BRIBED SOME VILLAGERS FOR INFORMATION.
"THAT'S WHY YOU'LL MAKE A BETTER KING THAN THAT GIRL."
"WOMEN ARE WEAK AND SWAYED BY THE DESIRES OF THE HEART. I KNOW BECAUSE I'M A WOMAN."
...I DON'T THINK WOMEN ARE CUT OUT FOR THE JOB."
"TRILDAN, THIS COUNTRY ALLOWS BOTH MEN OR WOMEN TO RULE, BUT...
WHAT ABOUT YOU, LADY PRIMULA?
DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?
MY MOTHER DID NOT PUSH ME TO BECOME KING ONLY OUT OF LOVE.
SHE BELIEVED THAT I COULD DO IT.

I THINK SHE WOULD HAVE REFUSED A KING OR A DUKE! BUT MY LADY WAS...
I'M NOT REGAL?
MOM WAS FAMOUS FOR HER COOKING. PEOPLE ASKED HER TO TEACH THEM, BUT SHE RARELY DID.
OUR HOUSE WAS BURNED OUT DURING THE WAR, BUT WE WERE INNKEEPERS.
I'M SORRY MY MOM WAS MEAN TO YOU THE OTHER DAY!
MY LADY, I'M JILL. NOIE IS MY MOTHER.
I DON'T HAVE IT IN ME...
...MY MOM SPECIALLY TAUGHT YOU BECAUSE YOU WERE SPECIAL! THAT'S WHAT I WANTED TO SAY!
I DON'T THINK OF YOU AS A QUEEN, BUT...
I THINK YOU TRY HARD, BUT YOU'RE NOT REALLY SKILLED AND YOU DON'T SEEM RELIABLE.

JILL...
THIS IS OUR CHANCE.
WE'LL SEND SOMEONE TO SNEAK INTO THE CAMP AND...
NO, I HAVE ANOTHER IDEA.
I DIDN'T MEAN TO PUSH HER AWAY LIKE THAT, BUT WHAT ELSE COULD I SAY?
I SHOULDN'T HAVE BEEN SUCH A SNOB!
I JUST CAN'T HELP MYSELF!
I ACTUALLY FEEL MY HEART FILL UP WITH JOY WHEN THE PRINCESS TEASES ME!
OH, MY LADY!
SHOVE

I TOLD YOU TO LOOK AFTER THE SHOP.
I WAS WORRIED ABOUT YOU AND THE PRINCESS.
Pretending to be Argent
SODA, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I DON'T GET IT. THE KING'S ORDERS?
YOU WERE THE ONE THAT DEFIED THE KING'S ORDERS FIRST!
YOU SAID RULES WERE MADE TO BE BROKEN!
I TRIED TO STOP HIM, BUT HE WOULDN'T LISTEN.
I DON'T NEED YOUR CONCERN!
!
THE KING IS HEADING THIS WAY WITH HIS SOLDIERS.
YES, THE TRAITORS ARE MAKING ANOTHER ASSASSI-NATION ATTEMPT.

WE SHOULD MOVE THE PRINCESS TO A SAFE PLACE.
MAYBE THEY'VE BEEN STALLED ALONG THE WAY!
HE'S NOT HERE YET?
WE TOOK THE LONG WAY THROUGH THE FOREST.
SHE'S NOT DOING WELL ENOUGH TO RELOCATE AT THE MOMENT.
YEAH... WHERE IS SHE?
"... MY MOM 'SPECIALLY TAUGHT YOU BECAUSE YOU WERE SPECIAL!"
I WONDER WHAT SHE MEANT...
ARGENT, IT'S YOU. WHAT IS IT?
CARLI AND SODA JUST ARRIVED.
THE TRAITORS ARE PLOTTING AGAIN.
!

THE KING IS ON HIS WAY HERE.
UNTIL HE ARRIVES, WE'LL BE TAKING TURNS GUARDING YOU.
I CAME HERE ONLY TO GET FREAKED OUT!
IT'S NOT JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE THE FUTURE QUEEN.
CARLI AND SODA ARE HELPING YOU UNDER THEIR OWN FREE WILL.
I THINK THAT'S AN IMPORTANT QUALITY.
IT'S RATHER IRONIC.
I'M NOT CUT OUT FOR THE THRONE. YOUR EFFORTS ARE WASTED ON ME.
SO?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT? YOU'RE THE FUTURE OF THIS COUNTRY!
I'M SICK OF HEARING IT!

...BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO GET POISONED BY ME AGAIN.
I SAID WHAT I SAID...
YOU CAN'T RULE A COUNTRY ON YOUR OWN.
SLIDE SLIDE SLIDE
THE TIME I INGESTED WOLFBANE TOXIN...
!
WHAT'S WRONG?
YOU'RE ABOUT TO GET EXECUTED! HURRY!
ARGENT, RUN!
CLACK

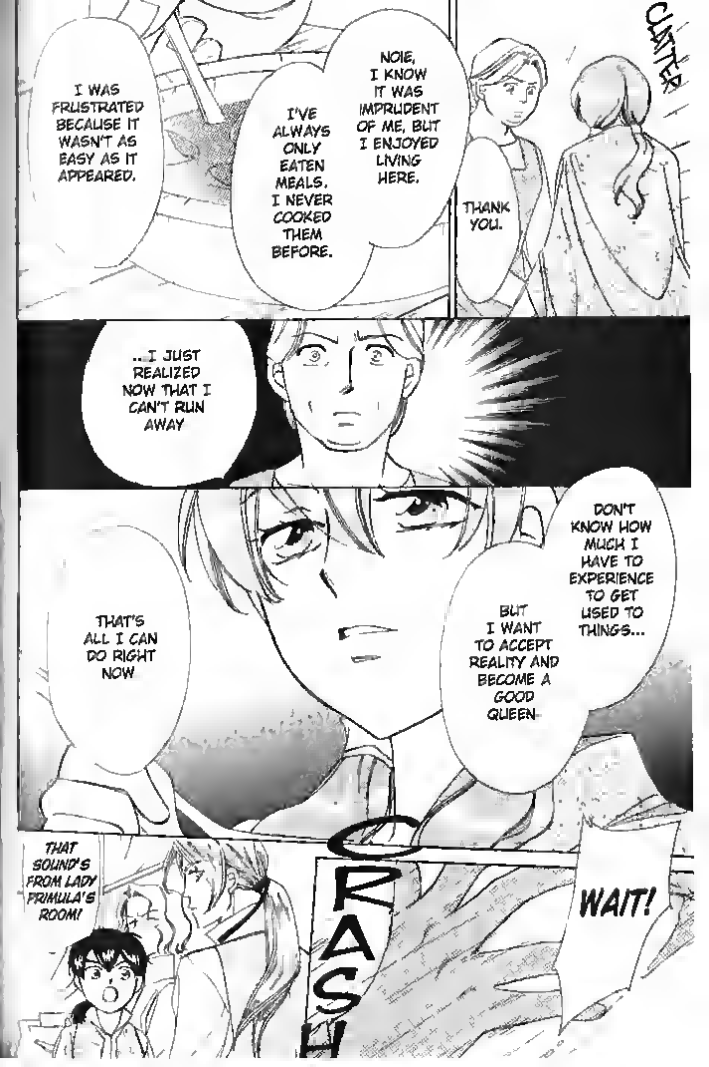
NO, I WANT TO BE WITH HER. I WANT TO DINE WITH HER...
RUN? I'LL PROBABLY BE CAPTURED AS LONG AS SHE EXISTS.
I MAY BE POISONED AGAIN...
LA... DY...?
SHOULD KILL HER MYSELF. IF I BITE HER, I WON'T HAVE TO BE A FOOD TASTER ANYMORE...
I ENJOYED HAVING SOMEONE TO EAT WITH. THANK YOU...
I KNOW, ARGENT. I UNDERSTAND.
"IT'S SO HARD AND PAINFUL THAT YOU THINK YOUR MIND AND HEART IS TURNING INTO POISON..."
"YOUR BODY STOPS RESPONDING."

I'M SORRY, ARGENT. YOU'RE SUFFERING, AND IT'S ALL MY FAULT!
I TOUCHED YOU ON PURPOSE.
LADY PRIMULA!
I WON'T DO ANY-THING LIKE THAT AGAIN!
SWING
BONK
IDIOT!! DON'T COME OUT WITHOUT YOUR CLOTHES!
YOU CALLED ME AN IDIOT?!
WHAT I WANTED TO SAY WAS...
SLAMM

KNOCK
KNOCK
KNOCK
COULD HE BE...
...IN LOVE WITH ME?
JILL, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?
JILL!
GOOD EVENING, NOIE.
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH MY DAUGHTER?!

I WANTED TO ASK A FAVOR FROM YOU.
"YOU WERE THERE BEFORE. AT THE LAST PUBLIC FUNCTION I ATTENDED?..."
ARGENT! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
"YOU'VE HELPED ME ENOUGH. I APPRECIATE THE THOUGHT..."
KNOCK KNOCK
WHO IS IT?
LADY PRIMULA, IT'S NOIE. IT'S TIME FOR DINNER.
Is it that late already?
DINNER?
I'M SORRY, NOIE! I WAS PLANNING TO HELP YOU TODAY, BUT I COULDN'T SLEEP LAST NIGHT...
IT'S QUITE ALL RIGHT, MY LADY. I CAME HERE TO APOLOGIZE.

A PARENT WILL DO ANYTHING FOR THEIR CHILD.
DO YOU THINK THAT WOMAN WILL FOLLOW THROUGH?
PLEASE, COME INSIDE.
JILL ...?
LAST NIGHT, MY DAUGHTER SCOLDED ME FOR NOT BEING MORE RESPECTFUL.
I WANT YOUR FORGIVENESS AND BROUGHT SOMETHING TO HELP YOU RECOVER YOUR HEALTH
I'M SORRY FOR BEING SO HARD ON YOU. IT'S FROM YEARS OF BEING IN BUSINESS.
SHIKE
SHIKE
"I JUST WANT YOU TO POISON THE PRINCESS' FOOD, THAT'S ALL."
"A FAVOR? WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?"
THIS IS A SPECIAL MEAL I MADE FOR YOU.


CLATTER
I WAS FRUSTRATED BECAUSE IT WASN'T AS EASY AS IT APPEARED.
I'VE ALWAYS ONLY EATEN MEALS. I NEVER COOKED THEM BEFORE.
NOIE, I KNOW IT WAS IMPRUDENT OF ME, BUT I ENJOYED LIVING HERE.
THANK YOU.
...I JUST REALIZED NOW THAT I CAN'T RUN AWAY
THAT'S ALL I CAN DO RIGHT NOW
BUT I WANT TO ACCEPT REALITY AND BECOME A GOOD QUEEN.
DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH I HAVE TO EXPERIENCE TO GET USED TO THINGS...
THAT SOUND'S FROM LADY PRIMULA'S ROOM!
CRASH
WAIT!

I BEG YOUR FORGIVENESS, MY LADY!
I TRIED TO POISON YOU. MY DAUGHTER WAS CAPTURED BY SOME BANDITS. SHE'S BEING HELD HOSTAGE!
SLAM
NOIE, YOU DON'T HAVE TO BEG FOR FORGIVENESS.
YOU MIGHT HAVE A SHARP TONGUE, BUT YOU'RE AN HONEST WOMAN.
THEY'RE AFTER YOUR LIFE! THEY'RE NEARBY!
I'LL TRY TO DISTRACT THEM AND BUY SOME TIME! PLEASE ESCAPE FROM THE REAR DOOR!
PRINCESS?
I CAN'T JUST RUN AWAY. WHEN I RUN, DARKNESS CAPTURES PEOPLE THAT I LOVE...
CLARIS AND ARGENT...
MY UNCLE...
EVEN NOIE.

SODA, CARL, TAKE THE PRINCESS TO A SAFE LOCATION. I'LL TAKE CARE OF THE SITUATION HERE.
YOU CAN'T.
YOUR JOB AS A HEALER DOES NOT INCLUDE HURTING OR MAIMING OTHERS.
YOU SAID THAT TO ME BEFORE.
KISS ME.
WHAAAT?! DURING A TIME LIKE THIS?! HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND?
LADY PRIM-ULA!
FAINT
PUT ME IN AN UNCONSCIOUS STATE WITH YOUR POISON SO I APPEAR TO BE DEAD.
THEY'LL CARRY MY BODY TO THEIR CAMP.
WE'LL ARREST THE WHOLE LOT, GET JILL BACK, AND THEN YOU CAN WAKE ME...
...LIKE YOU DID BEFORE.
THAT'S RECKLESS! TO TRUST ME WITH YOUR LIFE LIKE THAT...!

I BELIEVE IN YOU!
BECAUSE YOU'VE ALWAYS --
SEE?
WE DON'T HAVE TIME!

YOU DO LOVE ME...
SLAM
MY LADY... WHY...
LOOKS LIKE THE PLAN WAS SUCCESSFUL.
CARRY HER BODY.
I'LL LEAVE MARKS AS I FOLLOW THEM. SODA, FOLLOW THE MARKS AND BRING THE SOLDIERS!
BE CAREFUL. THEY'RE STILL NEARBY.
YES, MASTER!

CARLI!
WHAT'S GOING ON? I...
CARLI, YOU DIDN'T KNOW?
MY MASTER'S BODY IS POISONOUS.
I SEE...
HE WAS A BASILISK TRAINED TO BE AN ASSASSIN.
HIS UNIQUE BODY ALLOWS HIM TO BE A FOOD TASTER AND AN APOTHECARY.
THE REASON HE WAS UNDER HEAVY GUARD BACK THEN...
...WAS NOT JUST BECAUSE OF HIS POSITION AS A FOOD TASTER...
...BUT BECAUSE HE WAS DANGEROUS...
WHINNN
WHAT ARE YOU BOTH DOING HERE?!

THUD
DON'T TOUCH HER!
WE SHOULD CALL THE KING HERE. THAT SHOULD BE ENOUGH.
HERE'S YOUR LITTLE BRAT! GET OUT OF HERE!
THIS LITTLE WENCH HAS CAUSED ME SO MUCH GRIEF...
PRINCE TRILDAN, WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
SHOULD I SLICE HER UP AND SEND THE PIECES TO HER FATHER?

RUN, THE BOTH OF YOU!
CRACK
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS SMOKE?
KOFF
KOFF
THE PRINCESS HAS BEEN KIDNAPPED! FOLLOW THEM!
PRINCE TRILDAN, THIS WAY!
KOFF
WHERE'S SOD..?
NO, THE WIND'S BLOWING THAT WAY!
JILL!
RUSTLE RUSTLE RUSTLE
THEY'RE GOING TO CATCH UP TO US...

FWHIP!
UGNH!
THE KING!
CONSUL JIRCON, YOU AND YOUR MEN ARE UNDER ARREST FOR TREACHERY!
GOOD TO SEE YOU, MASTER!

THAT'S CORRECT ...
IS THIS EVERYONE IN YOUR CAMP?
HOW?! WE CAN'T SEE!
C'MON, WALK STRAIGHT!
I TOUCHED THE PRINCESS TO EXPOSE THE TRAITORS AND LOCATE THEIR CAMP.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. SHE'S JUST DEEPLY UNCONSCIOUS.
PRIMULA?
MASTER ...
GATHER SOME COWSLIP AND PRIMROSES.
CARLI, SODA, PLEASE HELP ME.
I ACCEPT. GO AHEAD.
JUST ALLOW ME TO MAKE THE ANTIDOTE FIRST.
I SWEAR TO FOLLOW THROUGH THIS TIME. I PROMISE TO DISAPPEAR FROM THE CASTLE FOR GOOD.

SHE'S NOT REGAINING CONSCIOUS-NESS.
PLEASE LET ME MAKE THE ANTIDOTE!
THE APOTHECARY HAS GIVEN UP.
YOU OVERCOME THE WOLFBANE?
DO WHAT YOU FEEL IS RIGHT.
HE'S VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT POISONS, MEANING HE COULD PROBABLY MAKE THE ANTIDOTE.
I'M FINE! I'VE RECOVERED FROM THE POISON!
ARGENT ...

I MUST HURRY...
I HAVE TO WAKE UP...
OTHER-WISE, ARGENT...
LADY PRIMULA, YOU'RE AWAKE!
WHERE'S ARGENT! ARGENT!
HE'S...
NO! I TOUCHED HIM ACCIDEN-TALLY!
WAIT!
YOU MAY HAVE SAVED LADY PRIMULA'S LIFE, BUT YOU MUST PAY FOR BREAKING THE RULE.
YOU WILL BE EXECUTED IMMEDI-ATELY.
HE'S MY FRIEND!
I MAY STILL TOUCH HIS CORPSE!

ARGENT, YOU MUST DISAPPEAR FROM MY SIGHT!
THERE MUST BE SOMETHING YOU CAN DO.
START OVER AND LIVE A FULL LIFE.
THE POISON HAS NOT AFFECTED YOUR SOUL!
LIVE AS A FREE MAN!
DASH
WAIT!
PRIMU-LA....?
SLAM
HELP! PRIMULA'S ...!

RELEASE THE KING.
WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?!
HEAR SOME-THING?
NOW'S MY CHANCE!
YOU MUST BE TRILDAN, TIGASON'S SON.
THAT'S RIGHT. MY MOTHER DIED TO SAVE ME.
I'M BACK TO SEIZE THE THRONE FROM YOU AND YOUR PROGENY!
CLASH!

CLANNNG
YOU'RE... ALIVE?
I WAS PLANNING ON SLEEPING LONGER, BUT THE RUCKUS WOKE ME UP!
YOU TRICKED US!
MY LADY!
PLEASE DON'T INTER-FERE!
ZZZT

LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING I HEARD FROM MY MOTHER, LADY PRIMULA.
WHEN YOUR MOTHER WAS PREGNANT WITH YOU...
...YOUR FATHER REALIZED YOUR BIRTH COULD CAUSE STRIFE. HE ASKED THE LATE QUEEN TO HAVE AN ABORTION.
MY KIND FATHER STOPPED THE ABORTION BY VOLUNTEERING TO STEP DOWN AS THE SUCCESSOR.
YET, YOUR MOTHER DIED! HA! THAT WAS A PUNISHMENT FROM GOD!
YOUR FATHER IS A RUTHLESS SNAKE!
NOW I KNOW WHY...
...HE SPOILED ME, YET KEPT HIS DISTANCE.
HE WAS BURDENED WITH GUILT...

DON'T LOOK AWAY!!
DO YOU STILL WANT TO SAVE THIS BASTARD?!
"FROM THIS DAY FORTH, I WILL BECOME STRONG! I WILL BECOME STRONGER THAN EVERYONE ELSE!"
I HAVEN'T CHANGED SINCE THAT DAY...
...BUT...
EVEN IF THAT WAS THE TRUTH...
WHY DOES IT MATTER?
MY FATHER MADE A DECISION AS A KING.
IN FACT, HE WAS RIGHT!
CLANG

YOU CAN HAVE THE THRONE IN MY PLACE.
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT, YOU CAN HAVE IT.
GOOD, THAT WAS QUICK...
YOU HEARD THE PRINCESS! EVERYONE, HEAR THIS!
I AM THE NEW KING OF BEAZOL!
CHUCK
GET OUTTA MY TOWN!!
WE WON'T ACCEPT YOU, YOU JERK!

"IT'S A CERTAIN ATTRACTIVE QUALITY THAT PEOPLE ARE MAGNETIZED TO."
"I KNOW I DON'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES, SO I HAD NO QUALMS ABOUT GIVING UP THE CROWN."
!
TRILDAN ...
YOU CAN CLAIM THE THRONE, BUT NOBODY WILL ACCEPT IT.
IN ORDER TO BE KING, YOU MUST BE ACCEPTED AS ONE.
"DO YOU WANT TO BE KING?"
"WHY?"

BECAUSE...
I'M SO GLAD NOBODY WAS HURT...
SLUMP
YOU RECOVERED WITHOUT AN ANTIDOTE...
MAYBE I'M DEVELOPING TOLERANCE TO YOUR POISON, ARGENT.
DON'T YOU THINK SO?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DEVELOP TOLERANCE. YOU'RE TOO RECKLESS!
PRIMULA
FATHER!
I CAN BE BECAUSE I HAVE YOU!

HE'S NEVER RAISED HIS HAND TOWARDS HER BEFORE!
HOW DARE YOU LEAVE THE CASTLE WITHOUT PERMISSION! YOU TAKE YOUR POSITION AS PRINCESS TOO FLIPPANTLY! YOU'LL BE UNDER HOUSE ARREST UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE!
YES, YOUR MAJESTY. I'M SORRY.
ARGENT! CARL! CARBEAU! YOU'RE ALL UNDER HOUSE ARREST!
YOUR MAJ-ESTY?
It's okay.
I knew it.
YOU ARE *NOT* TO "DISAP-PEAR."
MY DAUGHTER'S FAR TOO IMPULSIVE SHE WOULDN'T HAVE HER LIFE WITHOUT YOU GUARDING OVER HER.
PLEASE REMAIN AND PROTECT HER.

JUST REMEMBER TO MAINTAIN A PROPER DISTANCE.
"DO YOU WANT TO BE KING? WHY?"
I DON'T KNOW...
I THINK I WANTED TO CLEAR MY PARENT'S NAME... AND RESTORE MY PRIDE...
ZZZ
ZZZ
CLATTER CLATTER CLATTER
YOU'LL BE FINE.
WE'RE BOTH LUCKY JUST TO BE ALIVE!
CLATTER CLATTER CLATTER
WHO ARE YOU?! WHERE AM I?
I'M A TRAVELING ENTER-TAINER.
I FOUND YOU AFTER YOU FELL FROM YOUR HORSE.
AS YOU WISH, YOUR MAJESTY.

I WAS IN A FIRE, AND I LOST MY MEMORY.
FLAP
FATHER? WHY, DO YOU KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT ME?
THAT VOICE... FATHER?!
HUH, MAYBE I WAS A BAD GUY THAT DESERVED IT. WHO KNOWS?
IT LOOKS LIKE I MUST HAVE BEEN STABBED, BUT IT MISSED MY HEART.
THIS SCAR ON YOUR CHEST...
MOTHER...? DID SHE NOT KILL HIM ON PURPOSE? DID THE KING KNOWINGLY LET HIM GO?
NO, YOU WERE A GENTLE MAN.
I KNOW YOU VERY WELL.
I HOPE I'M A TRAVELING ENTERTAINER IN MY NEXT LIFE!
"I THINK I WAS BORN INTO THE ROYAL FAMILY BY SOME KIND OF COSMIC MISTAKE."
"YOU WERE A VERY GOOD, VERY ORDINARY FATHER."
HE WOULD HAVE MADE A GOOD PUPPET FOR PEOPLE THAT WOULD HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF HIM FOR THEIR SELFISH WANTS...
MY FATHER WAS A KIND-HEARTED MAN.
I SEE...
WELL, IF YOU HAVE NOWHERE TO GO, WHY DON'T YOU STAY WITH ME?

IN ORDER TO BE KING, THE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS A STRONG HEART THAT WON'T SUCCUMB TO DARKNESS...
I DON'T THINK GENDER IS AN ISSUE...
MY MOTHER'S HEART GOT TWISTED BECAUSE OF HER LOVE FOR ME...
LADY PRIMULA'S ONLY HUMAN. CAN SHE REMAIN STRONG FOR THE REST OF HER LIFE?
I THINK I'LL WATCH AND SEE...
THANK YOU FOR EVERY-THING.

WE'LL BE LOOKING FORWARD TO YOUR REIGN, LADY PRIMULA.
ARGENT, PLEASE PROTECT THE TOMBOY PRINCESS!
SHE'S AN IMPORTANT PERSON THAT WILL RULE OVER US AND GIVE BIRTH TO HER HEIR!
SURE.
STOP TALKING ABOUT SOMETHING SO FAR AWAY!
IT'S NOT AS FAR AWAY AS YOU THINK, MY LADY.
LET'S GO!
WE SHOULD GET BACK TO THE CASTLE BEFORE SUNSET!
HEY EVERYONE, I'LL RACE YOU TO THE CASTLE!
LADY PRIMULA, WAIT!!

Afterwords and Information

Thank you so much. Finally, we have another section complete! I was working on this volume until the last minute, so the bonus comic strip, the afterwords, and the plant information page are all crammed together. I hope to see you again with volume 3!

Tomomi Yamashita

Arsenic (Chapter 5)

It is considered a poison today, but in ancient Greece, it was used to treat skin conditions. The ancient Chinese also used arsenic as part of a potion for eternal youth and immortality. A lot of people died from accidental arsenic poisoning throughout history. In Japanese period dramas, "Iwazami ginzan," a form of arsenic, is often mentioned.

Datura Datura stramonium (Chapter 6)

It was apparently a common poison used during medieval Italy. Atropine, a tropane alkaloid present in Datura, interferes with the activity of the parasympathetic nervous system. Currently, it is used as an anticonvulsant and anesthetic. Datural metal was used by Hanaoka Seishu during the Edo Era (1603-1867) in Japan as part of an anesthetic called "Tsusensan" to perform the first breast cancer surgery in Japan during that time.

White Willow, Salix Alba (Chapter 7)

Hippocrates, the father of Western Medicine, noted the analgesic qualities of the White Willow Bark. It has been used as a painkiller and a fever reducer for centuries. A French pharmacist succeeded in extracting an active extract of the bark in the 19th century. Aspirin is a similar compound to salicin.

Aconitum sp. (Chapter 7)

The active principle of Aconitum napellus is the alkaloid aconitine. It was called a "Stepmother's Poison", "The Devil's Weed" and other names. It has been used as poison throughout the ages in many different cultures. In Chinese medicine, the detoxified root has been used as an analgesic and a tonic to strengthen the heart.

IT'S HIGH QUALITY CUCUMBER AND EGGPLANT.
WHAT IS THIS?
Thought you might get lonely all by your self!
IT LOOKS LIKE A GIANT POT FULL OF RICE BRAN PASTE.
THIS IS THE DETOXIFYING EQUIPMENT THE RICE BRAN CAPSULE!
It will custom made by Dr. Nordaman the USA!
IT USES THE HIGHEST QUALITY RICE BRAN. YOUR SKIN WILL GLOW AFTER THIS!
LEAVE IT UP TO ME!
MASTER, YOU'RE A YOUNG VIRILE MAN. I'M SURE YOU WANT TO GET LOVEY WITH THE PRINCESS.
I'M GOING TO DETOXIFY IN THE RICE BRAN AND RETURN MY BODY TO NORMAL!
Finally made a major decision!
RICE-BRAN ARGENT CHAPTER
Another Mystery Story by Mirelle

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